# THIS QUARTER

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# THIS QUARTER

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THIS QUARTER

July - August - September 1929

# *EDITORIALLY:*

*THIS QUARTER*

We owe a word of explanation, or apology, as some of our friends insist. Why have we taken over THIS QUARTER from its former editors and publishers? Are we going to follow in its footsteps? Did any goodwill go with it? Why, if we must edit a quarterly, did we not start one from the egg up? Why this, why that, and what not! To tell the truth, although we have been watching THIS QUARTER from its inception under the courageous editorship of our predecessors, we were never quite sure whither its footsteps led. Not that it is essential to the quality of a publication of this character that it lead anywhere in particular. Its charm is so much greater if it proceed to unknown destinations and wander aimlessly over unsurveyed territories or drift heedlessly over plumbed and unplumbed seas. If it were Cook-led, bent on cut and dried voyages and excursions, time-tabled, measured off correctly down to fractions of kilometers, we would have none of it. Hence the irrrelevancy of *that* question.

Frankly, a publication which at great sacrifice had enriched the domain of letters with such a gem as Ernest Hemingway's *The Undefeated;* Robert McAlmon's *The Mystical Forest;* such haunting rhythms as these of Ezra Pound:

> *Arms laid over my shoulder,*
> *Saw the sun for three days, the sun fulvid,*
> *And that day,*
> *And for three days, and none after,*
> *Splendour, as the splendour of Hermes.*

or this out of a multitude of others from the pen of Ernest Walsh:

*Steps, worn by funerals of the poor,*
*Pillars, in solitary squalor —*
*Unwashed stone shoulders*
*Heavy as a man with the sweat*
*Of ten thousand August days.*
*Mouth of death, open, unbreathing, cold, wet,*
*— O flesh, hug closer to the bone!*

and still others, by others. Such a publication, we say, deserves at least that modicum of perpetuation which we are so feebly able to allot to it.

*STEIN & SANDBURG*

And lest we forget, among the memorabilia, Gertrude Stein's pronouncement:

"*We often been interested in the use of the word capital,*"

and Carl Sandburg's documentary constatation:

"*The whores of Cincinnati are old.*"

Let some malicious imp destroy every vestige of Gertrude's innumerable tomes and essays and articles as revealed to a gasping world in a recently printed bibliography of published and *unpublished* (but awaiting, awaiting publication) works, and that one inspired sentence will put us on the path of righteousness.

Let some terrestrial upheaval delete the picturesque city of Cincinnati, yet her Messalinas, her Phrynes, her Circes, Aspasias, Pompadours, Fanny Hills and Moll Flanders will have their sempiternal monument in that other line, and the world will know them for what they were.

*ARBITER POETARUM*

To our economically-minded friends who expressed alarm lest we were not sufficiently mindful of our material interests, and who made timid reference to that concept which the jargon of the law misnames goodwill we avow that we have not thought of it all. So far from any goodwill, it was rather, if the coinage be permitted, a sort of unmalicious and to all appearance straightforwardly righteous illwill, in which there was no participation on our part, that became intermixed with the transaction of acquiring THIS QUARTER. For clarity it should be recalled that the first issue of THIS

QUARTER, dated Spring 1925, bore the following eulogistic dedication:

"*This number is dedicated to Ezra Pound who by his creative work, his editorship of several magazines, his helpful friendship for young and unknown artists, his many and untiring efforts to win better appreciation of what is first rate in art, comes first to our mind as meriting the gratitude of this generation.*"

Thus read the dedication, and let us say on our part that the qualities enumerated therein were understated rather than overstated. But in the interval between the first and third numbers of THIS QUARTER something had happened. Through the demise of her co-editor, Mr. Ernest Walsh, Miss Ethel Moorhead, having become sole editor, cancelled in the third number of THIS QUARTER the dedication which the first number bore in honor of Ezra Pound, in a long editorial utterance from which we abstract the following :

"*I herewith take back that dedication. I have said before that Ernest Walsh was disillusioned about Ezra Pound before he died. We take back our too generous dedication.*"

Now the reason which underlay the withdrawal of the dedication did not interest us then and does not interest us now, but the passion, the frénesie mystique, the courage, the moral fervor, the gesture, the utterly rectitudinous illwill and the unprecedented irregularity of it roused our admiration. In the history of literary quarrels it is, as far as we know, unparallelled.

"Meriting the gratitude of this generation", this Arbiter Poetarum, — as once the Roman populace hurled from the cliffs Eumolpous, the playmate of that other Arbiter, Petronius, wreathed in vervain and in sacred garments, — was by the frail hand of brave little Ethel Moorhead thrown headlong from his eminence.

*THE HOOVERS' AGRICOLA*

With uncanny penetration André Maurois, in a recently published paper *On Living in England*, advises a young Frenchman how he should conduct himself during a projected visit to that country. If his young compatriot has written a book, Maurois enjoins on him strictest silence. On no condition should he talk about it to his hosts. Let them discover the fact for themselves.

GEORGIUS AGRICOLA

# DE RE METALLICA

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIRST LATIN EDITION OF 1556

with

Biographical Introduction, Annotations and Appendices upon
the Development of Mining Methods, Metallurgical
Processes, Geology, Mineralogy & Mining Law
from the earliest times to the 16th Century

BY


## HERBERT CLARK HOOVER

A. B. Stanford University, Member American Institute of Mining Engineers,
Mining and Metallurgical Society of America, Société des Ingénieurs
Civils de France, American Institute of Civil Engineers,
Fellow Royal Geographical Society, etc., etc.

AND

## LOU HENRY HOOVER

A. B. Stanford University, Member American Association for the
Advancement of Science, The National Geographical Society,
Royal Scottish Geographical Society, etc., etc.

Published for the Translators by

THE MINING MAGAZINE

SALISBURY HOUSE, LONDON, E.C.

1912

We suspect that Maitre Maurois would not have been able to establish a claim to priority for his good advice had the young Frenchman's destination been the United States. There he would have found the claim preempted. If the taboo has been observed to exist in England, it is no less prevalent and inviolable in America. This has been curiously demonstrated during the last presidential campaign.

In 1912, in London, there was published by the *Mining Magazine* of that city an imposing tome in folio containing close upon 700 pages with numerous woodcut illustrations, — bearing on the title page which we reproduce opposite — the names of Herbert Clark Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover, his wife. The book has since become a rarity and is much sought after by collectors.

Innumerable and endless details, important and trivial, of the life of the Hoovers were published during the campaign for political consumption, but as far as we know but little was said concerning the scholarship, the severely disciplined scholarship, that the performance of the gruelling task of preparing this book for publication called for. None of the limpidity of Caesar's Commentaries or of Virgil or Horace or Cicero in the Latin of Agricola, but that terror of terrors, 16th century bastard Latin.

We also have on our own account some notion and experience of the difficulties surrounding the translation into idiomatic English of a work of that sort. For sometime past we have been playing with the intention of fathering the translation into English of a 16th century book, one half of which is written in 16th century French, the other in Latin of the same period. The French is comparative child's play. But for nearly two years we have been looking for a competent latinist to undertake to our satisfaction the rendering of the Latin portion into English. We have not found our man.

The United States, although notoriously a country afflicted with the educational complex to an extent unequalled in any other part of the world and which had once accepted professorialism in office tenure, after a fashion, would not have swallowed scholasticism in a presidential candidate. American womanhood would probably even have relished less a First Lady of the land who was known to possess scholastic qualities of the highest order. At this distance it is difficult to say with certainty, but it would not be surprising if, when this matter was discussed among the

initiated, it was as the Disciples who had come to their Lord and Master, — privately and by night.

The fact of the collaboration of the wife with the husband in the monumental work which added something signally idyllic to the performance would have been in itself irresistible to a people as deeply sentimental as the American, had only the subject matter not been so very special, so high-brow and blue-stocking. However exceptional and superb culturally, it might yet have proved provocative of resentment and directly unsocial in a community where mediocrity is the sacrosanct rule and only silence or vociferation is distinctive and capable of lifting a public man above the level of average.

Such must have been the discreet judgment of the Republican National Committee when in their political wisdom they stressed the administrative and professional eminence of their candidate and soft-pedalled his more prodigious attainments in learning and classical tastes. The votes of the intellectuals would have counted for nothing. The voice of the mediocre is the voice of the country. In our career innocent of all political leanings there are only two political events that have thrilled us: The selection in England of Miss Bondfield to the ministry of labor and the election of Hoover to the presidency of the United States. Inspiriting and inspiring both.



*THE LITTLE REVIEW'S SWAN SONG*

We have in our collection of curiosities a Notice of Demise, fitly framed between black borders, signed by Messrs. Jules Claretie, Arsène Houssaye, Emile Zola, Charles Monselet, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, etc., etc., who "have the honor to announce the sad loss the family have sustained in the demise, July 3, 1879, of Journal Le Molière, their son, grandson and son-in-law, respectively, at the age of five months and ten days. Friends are requested to pray for its resurrection."

This bit of macabre humor occurs to us as we receive the Final Number of *The Little Review*, issued in Paris. Magazines have a facile knack of coming back. Like the farewells of actresses, an announced last performance is not always conclusively ultimate. In her swan song Miss Margaret Anderson hints, just barely hints, at another review; this other review, — why may it not be, why may

we not hope that it might be — a resuscitated *Little Review?*

Only it is disconcerting to observe that the two editresses, or the Administration, as they prefer to describe themselves, the Misses Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, — la brune et la blonde, — have failed to thrash out between themselves certain important details before they wrote their respective valedictories, with the result that their backchat betrays a decided insufficiency of rehearsal.

And thus Miss Anderson writes: "So I made a magazine for the very good artists of the time." Miss Heap, on the other hand, confesses: "We have given space in *The Little Review* to 23 new systems of art (all now dead), representing 19 countries. In all this we have not brought forward anything approaching a masterpiece except *Ulysses* of Joyce." But even that work, owing to one thing and another, does not strike her as "a masterpice in the true sense of the word. A preceding paragraph of Miss Heap's teems with pathos. "For years we offered *The Little Review* as a trial-track for racers. We hoped to find artists who could run with the great artists of the past or men who could make new records. But you can't get horses from mules."

In the pious process of "hanging a few wreaths of affection and remembrance on some of those contributors", the aforesaid horses and mules are breath-takingly transformed, — again by Miss Heap. They become: "The ugly ducklings of yesterday, the swans of today." As workers of metamorphosis David Garnett with his Lady into Fox, Virginia Woolf with Orlando, and patriarch Ovid with his luxurious fables are the merest tyros. Decidedly, the worshipful Administration of *The Little Review* should have talked things over between themselves.

The esteem in which *The Little Review* was held was due indisputably to the fact that it had opened its pages to great artists, and was on occasion the only periodical that would accept their work, "spontaneously, whole-heartedly", — as no lesser personalities than Messrs. T. S. Eliot and Maxwell Bodenheim (wie reimt sich das zusammen?) attest in their respective contributions and tributes to the Final Number. And now all these "Kapazitaeten" are cavalierly handled by one half of the Administration. Decidedly, things should have been talked over.

What between la blonde who protests that her magazine

was "exclusively for the very good artists of the time", and la brune who laments she could not get "race horses from mules"; and the Hon. Ben Hecht lèse-majestying an eminent fellow contributor by calling him a "ham artist"; and the Administrations cock-a-doodle-doo boast that they had suppressed Ezra Pound's manuscripts and "conscientiously thrown them into the waste paper basket"; and the already so handsome, cropped-moustached Richard Aldington wishing he were Ninon de l'Enclos; and the equally stunning Ernest Hemingway's ineffably delectable parody entitled Valentine, — the reader of the Final Number of *The Little Review* has as generous a 25 francs' worth as was ever altruistically offered to the cream of an intellectual public.

Also one other landmark has passed, *The Dial*... But we shall still go on marking time.

*FABULOUS FIGURES*

The Bookman (American) has it that there are 275,000,000 copies of magazines distributed every month in America. Add to it whatever may be the corresponding quota of Great Britain and her colonies, and the responsibility we are incurring in taking upon ourselves the task of further increasing these fabulous figures appals us. We are hopeful however that a very conspicuous contribution by us to those numbers may be instrumental in consoling us effectively. The adage that there is always room at the top would by itself but slightly attenuate our distress.

*POSTMEN'S STRIKE*

The Paris correspondent of *The Observer* (London) commented recently on the 24 hour strike of the Paris postmen. He wondered what they had to strike for. They get the equivalent of nearly two pounds ($10) a week and that, he insisted, is not a bad starting wage according to French standards.

The strike, as we understood its origin, was not due to a a wage dispute merely, and it is not for us, strangers in a strange land, to sit in judgment, but unless it be a deliberate display of obscurantism on the part of the *Observer* correspondent, it seems strange that it has not

occurred to him that strikes ultimately always involve protests against or attacks on so-called standards. Clamor for higher earnings — and again we say that it is not for us to take a stand on the concrete case of the postal strike and that it would be in questionable taste if we did, — is pretty conclusive evidence of a strong desire to change existing standards. It is this precise change — for how else could it have come about? — that in the long run had made it possible for the labor members of the present cabinet in England to don silk hats and formal morning dress over which so much ado has been made in the London press.

The first woman minister of labor, Miss Bondfield, laughed when a reporter asked her if she were excited at the prospects before her. "Oh, dear, no", she answered, "after forty years of blazing the trail one ceases to be excited about things."

"Blazing the trail," — for what, if not for the establishment of new standards and the abolishing of old?

# FIRST BLOOD

by

Herbert Read

Snow falling all night: in the morning the world will be white. The earth will be covered with a nice new coat of paint, to hide the scars and pockmarks. For the earth is in a bad way — a battered old scarecrow, blackened, ragged, her fingers and toes all splintered. Oh such a mess!

Sanctuary Wood : what a name! The god of this sacred place is Moloch, and he is a very fierce old god, and people say that to seek sanctuary in his arms is to say goodbye to your beloved. His sanctuary is a wood, a dark gloomy glade, full of caves and ditches. If you wait till daylight you will find that the trees have no branches, but are whiskered with splinters. Tatterdemalion trees, you might say; all higgledy-piggledy, like darts in a target. An acre of frenzied brushwood. It is the worst place in the Salient (*the* Salient, not *a* salient: just as we say the Cross when we mean a cross on which mankind is crucified).

A salient is a sexual symbol. As the war stiffened its hold on men's imaginations and became, not a controllable event but a ravage that must mount the scale of fever and slowly fall, the Salient became a fixed idea. To maintain this thrust into the enemy's side was the insane will of a whole army. It was not justified in a strategic sense. It was a blind impulse,

to which hundreds of thousands of lives were sacrificed.

If you are established at the point of a salient, it means that you can be fired on from almost every direction. On both flanks the enemy stretches behind you, and from rising ground can shoot into your back. The ordinary defences of trench warfare are useless: there is no distinction between parados and parapet; none between front and flank. You must make the best of a circle. The circle will in effect become a moated mound, with deep-set caves in its sides. But it is futile to dig down into this flat spongy earth; that is only worth while if you want wells to drown rats in. The water is everywhere.

The mound is therefore pierced with low caverns just above the level of the ground. These caverns are about three feet high: it is impossible to sit up in them. You can crawl in to sleep and to suffocate, but when your lungs are bursting, or the desire for food or the needs of nature draw you out, then you must walk into an ambush of snipers. Naturally whatever possible is done by night; in the day the sentries crawl out like snakes over the duckboards to relieve one another. And now and then an officer slides out on his rounds to see that all is well and to make observations.

But naturally the enemy has concentrated his best snipers in this area. It offers the best sport on the Western Front, and it is a poor day on which each rifle cannot be credited with a couple of men.

When the earth is white, the dugout entrances show up like black holes, and when a man crawls out over the white duckboards, he is as clearly visible as a hare in the snow. White overalls are requisitioned : they will make the chances more even.

It is nervy business for a raw subaltern. The

first time he goes out in the daylight, a shot from the front cracks like a whip in his ear. He draws in his breath and the blood deserts his face. Immediately the air cracks behind him and a bullet ricochets from the bank he faces. Terror melts his limbs. He falls to the ground and grasps the rungs of the duckboard.

He had forgotten. He had not realised that death could be so imminent, waiting for him round the corner, his first day in the front line. They had said to him: You must crawl. But it is not easy to remember to crawl; it is not an attitude that comes natural to a man.

He had reconnoitered the post with the Company Commander during the night. It was not complicated: an incomplete circle with four posts at intervals — sheltered coigns from which two men would be watching through a narrow slit in an armoured plate. Every three hours they must be visited and reports collected.

He crawled to the first one, and from the first to the second, and then from the second to the third. "If you keep your head down you can walk along to the next post," they told him at the third post. He would be glad to crouch for a change. Already his knees and arms were sodden with the snow. He paused and leant against the walls of the trench. The sky was grey above him; a few black shattered boles shone out of the white scene with negative intensity. The duckboards stretched in front of him in the wide shallow trench, leading to a dugout whose mounded roof made an almost perfect dome.

Perhaps twenty yards away.

A tall figure emerged from the dugout.

It was Corporal Costello. He recognized his red hatchet face and dark sloe eyes. He came from Cleveland and had been in the same company in the early days at the training camp.

He was holding a mess tin in his hand and intent on some purpose or other. He looked up. Again that infernal crack in the still air. A cry. Corporal Costello lay on the duckboards.

He was shot through the neck. He was full blooded and the blood sprang out in jets and stained the snow.

Tourniquet, tourniquet. The word went singing through the subaltern's head. Tourniquet, tourniquet. That's how you stop the flow of blood. Other men had emerged from the dugout and they were dragging the Corporal into the shelter of the parapet. One of them pressed his thumb below the bleeding wound. It was no use. The blood would flow. They bandaged his neck, but whilst they worked the Corporal's face turned purple and the death rattle issued from his torn throat.

The subaltern could not stir. He was fascinated — fascinated and sick. He stayed rooted there until the men had laid their comrade softly in the snow, and covered his stiffening body with a waterproof sheet. Then he let his numb hands fall from the side of the frozen trench. His stomach retched. Opposite he noticed a piece of raw board, roughly lettered with the world Latrine. He stumbled down the shallow trench and held his face over a bucket. The sickness passed. Perhaps one nausea cures another. Everywhere there was the stink of chloride of lime; they put it on excrement and dead alike.

Back in the line again he glanced down to where the dead Corporal lay. There was such a wide red stain on the white earth, and nothing merciful to cover it from the eyes of the Corporal's friends. His body lay stiff all that day under a waterproof sheet by the side of the trench. At night they would take it down the line to bury.

These were quiet days in the Salient. "You are

lucky," said the Company Commander, later in the day, "not to come in for a strafe. It is the quietest turn we've had for months."

Snow fell again in the night. Will it cover all that blood? wondered the subaltern. Or will the stain spread?

You could tell, from the nervous lines that were now etched round his eyes, that youth had lost its innocence.

The snow fell all night and the following day. On his round, the new subaltern came to the spot where Costello had been killed. They had taken his body away in the night. But the blood was still there, staining the snow.

The subaltern was unreasonably angry. He went to the dugout entrance and shouted: "You there!" A tousled head appeared. "Why the hell can't you put some chloride of lime on this bloody mess?"

# PORNOGRAPHY AND OBSCENITY

by

D. H. Lawrence

What they are depends, as usual, entirely on the individual. What is pornography to one man is the laughter of genius to another.

The word itself, we are told, means "pertaining to harlots" — the graph of the harlot. But nowadays, what is a harlot? If she was a woman who took money from a man in return for going to bed with him — really, most wives sold themselves, in the past, and plenty of harlots gave themselves, when they felt like it, for nothing. If a woman hasn't got a tiny streak of a harlot in her, she's a dry stick as a rule. And probably most harlots had somewhere a streak of womanly generosity. Why be so cut and dried? The law is a dreary thing, and its judgments have nothing to do with life.

The same with the word *obscene:* nobody knows what it means. Suppose it were derived from *ob-scena:* that which might not be represented on the stage; how much further are you? None! What is obscene to Tom is not obscene to Lucy or Joe, and really, the meaning of a word has to wait for majorities to decide it. If a play shocks ten people in an audience, and doesn't shock the remaining five hundred, then it is obscene to ten and innocuous to five hundred; hence, the play is not obscene, by majority. But *Hamlet* shocked all the Cromwellian

Puritans, and shocks nobody today, and some of Aristophanes shocks everybody today, and didn't galvanise the later Greeks at all, apparently. Man is a changeable beast, and words change their meanings with him, and things are not what they seemed, and what's what becomes what isn't, and if we think we know where we are it's only because we are so rapidly being translated to somewhere else. We have to leave everything to the majority, everything to the majority, everything to the mob, the mob, the mob. They know what is obscene and what isn't, they do. If the lower ten million doesn't know better than the upper ten men, then there's something wrong with mathematics. Take a vote on it! Show hands, and prove it by count! Vox populi, vox Dei. Odi profanum vulgum! Profanum vulgum.

So it comes down to this: if you are talking to the mob, the meaning of your words is the mob-meaning, decided by majority. As somebody wrote to me: the American law on obscenity is very plain, and America is going to enforce the law. Quite, my dear, quite, quite, quite! The mob knows all about obscenity. Mild little words that rhyme with spit or farce are the height of obscenity. Supposing a printer put "h" in the place of "p", by mistake, in that mere word spit? Then the great American public knows that this man has committed an obscenity, an indecency, that his act was lewd, and as a compositor he was pornographical. You can't tamper with the great public, British or American. Vox populi, vox Dei, don't you know. If you don't we'll let you know it. At the same time, this vox Dei shouts with praise over moving-pictures and books and newspaper accounts that seem, to a sinful nature like mine, completely disgusting and obscene. Like a real prude and Puritan, I have to look the other way. When obscenity becomes mawkish, which is its

palatable form for the public, and when the Vox populi, vox Dei is hoarse with sentimental indecency, then I have to steer away, like a Pharisee, afraid of being contaminated. There is a certain kind of sticky universal pitch that I refuse to touch.

So again, it comes down to this: you accept the majority, the mob, and its decisions, or you don't. You bow down before the Vox populi, vox Dei, or you plug your ears not to hear its obscene howl. You perform your antics to please the vast public, Deus ex machina, or you refuse to perform for the public at all, unless now and then to pull its elephantine and ignominious leg.

When it comes to the meaning of anything, even the simplest word, then you must pause. Because there are two great categories of meaning, forever separate. There is mob-meaning, and there is individual meaning. Take even the word *bread.* The mob-meaning is merely: stuff made with white flour into loaves that you eat. But take the individual meaning of the word bread: the white, the brown, the corn-pone, the home-made, the smell of bread just out of the oven, the crust, the crumb, the unleavened bread, the shew-bread, the staff of life, sour-dough bread, cottage loaves, French bread, Viennese bread, black bread, a yesterday's loaf, rye, Graham, barley, rolls, Bretzeln, Kringeln, scones, damper, matsen — there is no end to it all, and the word bread will take you to the ends of time and space, and far-off down avenues of memory. But this is individual. The word bread will take the individual off on his own journey, and its meaning will be his own meaning, based on his own genuine imagination reactions. And when a word comes to us in its individual character, and starts in us the individual responses, it is a great pleasure to us. The American advertisers have discovered this, and some of the

cunningest American literature is to be found in advertisements of soap-suds, for example. These advertisements are *almost* prose-poems. They give the word soap-suds a bubbly, shiny individual meaning, which is very skilfully poetic, would, perhaps, be quite poetic to the mind which could forget that the poetry was bait on a hook.

Business is discovering the individual, dynamic meaning of words, and poetry is losing it. Poetry more and more tends to far-fetch its word-meanings, and this results once again in mob-meanings, which arouse only a mob-reaction in the individual. For every man has a mob self and an individual self, in varying proportions. Some men are almost all mob-self, incapable of imaginative individual responses. The worst specimens of mob-self are usually to be found in the professions, lawyers, professors, clergymen and so on. The business man, much maligned, has a tough outside mob-self, and a scared, floundering, yet still alive individual self. The public, which is feeble-minded like an idiot, will never be able to preserve its individual reactions from the tricks of the exploiter. The public is always exploited and always will be exploited. The methods of exploitation merely vary. Today the public is tickled into laying the golden egg. With imaginative words and individual meanings it is tricked into giving the great goose-cackle of mob-acquiescence. Vox populi, vox Dei. It has always been so, and will always be so. Why? Because the public has not enough wit to distinguish between mob-meanings and individual-meanings. The mass is forever vulgar, because it can't distinguish between its own original feelings and feelings which are diddled into existence by the exploiter. The public is always profane, because it is controlled from the outside, by the trickster, and never from the inside, by its own

sincerity. The mob is always obscene, because it is always second-hand.

Which brings us back to our subject of pornography and obscenity. The reaction to any word may be, in any individual, either a mob-reaction or an individual reaction. It is up to the individual to ask himself : Is my reaction individual, or am I merely reacting from my mob-self ?

When it comes to the so-called obscene words, I should say that hardly one person in a million escapes mob-reaction. The first reaction is almost sure to be mob-reaction, mob-indignation, mob-condemnation. And the mob gets no further. But the real individual has second thoughts and says : Am I *really* shocked ? Do I *really* feel outraged and indignant ? And the answer of any individual is bound to be : No, I am not shocked, not outraged, nor indignant. I know the word, and take it for what it is, and I am not going to be jockeyed into making a mountain out of a mole-hill, not for all the law in the world.

Now if the use of a few so-called obscene words will startle man or woman out of a mob-habit into an individual state, well and good. And word prudery is so universal a mob-habit that it is time we were startled out of it.

But still we have only tackled obscenity, and the problem of pornography goes even deeper. When a man is startled into his individual self, he still may not be able to know, inside himself, whether Rabelais is or is not pornographic : and over Aretino or even Boccaccio he may perhaps puzzle in vain, torn between different emotions.

One essay on pornography, I remember, comes to the conclusion that pornography in art is that which is calculated to arouse sexual desire, or sexual excitement. And stress is laid on the fact, whether the

author or artist *intended* to arouse sexual feelings. It is the old vexed question of intention, become so dull today, when we know how strong and influential our unconscious intentions are. And why a man should be held guilty of his conscious intentions, and innocent of his unconscious intentions, I don't know, since every man is more made up of unconscious intentions than of conscious ones. I am what I am, not merely what I think I am.

However ! We take it, I assume, that *pornography* is something base, something unpleasant. In short, we don't like it. And why don't we like it ? Because it arouses sexual feelings ?

I think not. No matter how hard we may pretend otherwise, most of us rather like a moderate rousing of our sex. It warms us, stimulates us like sunshine on a grey day. After a century of two of Puritanism, this is still true of most people. Only the mob-habit of condemning any form of sex is too strong to let us admit it naturally. And there are, of course, many people who are genuinely repelled by the simplest and most natural stirrings of sexual feeling. But these people are perverts who have fallen into hatred of their fellow men : thwarted, disappointed, unfulfilled people, of whom, alas, our civilisation contains so many. And they nearly always enjoy some unsimple and unnatural form of sex excitement, secretly.

Even quite advanced art critics would try to make us believe that any picture or book which had "sex appeal" was ipso facto a bad book or picture. This is just canting hypocrisy. Half the great poems, pictures, music, stories of the whole world are great by virtue of the beauty of their sex appeal. Titian or Renoir, the *Song of Solomon* or *Jane Eyre*, Mozart or *Annie Laurie*, the loveliness is all interwoven with sex appeal, sex stimulus, call it what you

will. Even Michael Angelo, who rather hated sex, can't help filling the Cornucopia with phallic acorns. Sex is a very powerful, beneficial and necessary stimulus in human life, and we are all grateful when we feel its warm, natural flow through us, like a form of sunshine.

So we can dismiss the idea that sex appeal in art is pornography. It may be so to the grey Puritan, but the grey Puritan is a sick man, soul and body sick, so why should we bother about his hallucinations ? Sex appeal, of course, varies enormously. There are endless different kinds, and endless degrees of each kind. Perhaps it may be argued that a mild degree of sex appeal is not pornographical, whereas a high degree is. But this is a fallacy. Boccaccio at his hottest seems to me less pornographical than *Pamela* or *Clarissa Harlowe* or even *Jane Eyre*, or a host of modern books or films which pass uncensored. At the same time Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* seems to me very near to pornography, and so, even, do some quite popular Christian hymns.

What is it, then ? It isn't a question of sex appeal, merely : nor even a question of deliberate intention on the part of the author or artist to arouse sexual excitement. Rabelais sometimes had a deliberate intention, so in a different way, did Boccaccio. And I'm sure poor Charlotte Brontë, or the authoress of *The Sheik* did *not* have any deliberate intention to stimulate sex feelings in the reader. Yet I find *Jane Eyre* verging towards pornography and Boccaccio seems to me always fresh and wholesome.

The British Home Secretary, who prides himself on being a very sincere Puritan, grey, grey in every fibre, said with indignant sorrow in one of his outbursts on improper books : " — and these two young people, who had been perfectly pure up till that time, after reading this book went and had sexual inter-

course together!!!" *One up to them!* is all we can answer. But the grey Guardian of British Morals seemed to think that if they had murdered one another, or worn each other to rags of nervous prostration, it would have been much better. The grey disease!

Then what is pornography, after all this? It isn't sex appeal or sex stimulus in art. It isn't even a deliberate intention on the part of the artist to arouse or excite sexual feelings. There's nothing wrong with sexual feelings in themselves, so long as they are straightforward and not sneaking or sly. The right sort of sex stimulus is invaluable to human daily life. Without it the world grows grey. I would give everybody the gay Renaissance stories to read, they would help to shake off a lot of grey self-importance, which is our modern civilised disease.

But even I would censor genuine pornography, rigorously. It would not be very difficult. In the first place, genuine pornography is almost always underworld, it doesn't come into the open. In the second, you can recognise it by the insult it offers, invariably, to sex, and to the human spirit.

Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it. This is unpardonable. Take the very lowest instance, the picture post-card sold under hand, by the underworld, in most cities. What I have seen of them have been of an ugliness to make you cry. The insult to the human body, the insult to a vital human relationship! Ugly and cheap they make the human nudity, ugly and degraded they make the sexual act, trivial and cheap and nasty.

It is the same with the books they sell in the underworld. They are either so ugly they make you ill, or so fatuous you can't imagine anybody but a cretin or a moron reading them, or writing them.

It is the same with the dirty limericks that people tell after dinner, or the dirty stories one hears commercial travellers telling each other in a smoke-room. Occasionally there is a really funny one, that redeems a great deal. But usually they are just ugly and repellant, and the so-called "humour" is just a trick of doing dirt on sex.

Now the human nudity of a great many modern people is just ugly and degraded, and the sexual act between modern people is just the same, merely ugly and degrading. But this is nothing to be proud of. It is the catastrophe of our civilisation. I am sure no other civilisation, not even the Roman, has showed such a vast proportion of ignominious and degraded nudity, and ugly, squalid dirty sex. Because no other civilisation has driven sex into the underworld, and nudity to the W. C.

The intelligent young, thank Heaven, seem determined to alter in these two respects. They are rescuing their young nudity from the stuffy, pornographical hole-and-corner underworld of their elders, and they refuse to sneak about the sexual relation. This is a change the elderly grey ones of course deplore, but it is in fact a very great change for the better, and a real revolution.

But it is amazing how strong is the will in ordinary, vulgar people, to do dirt on sex. It was one of my fond illusions, when I was young, that the ordinary healthy-seeming sort of men, in railway carriages, or the smoke-room of an hotel or a pullman, were healthy in their feelings and had a wholesome rough devil-may-care attitude toward sex. All wrong! All wrong! Experience teaches that common individuals of this sort have a disgusting attitude toward sex, a disgusting contempt of it, a disgusting desire to insult it. If such fellows have intercourse with a woman, they triumphantly feel that they have done her dirt,

and now she is lower, cheaper, more contemptible that she was before.

It is individuals of this sort that tell dirty stories, carry indecent picture post-cards, and know the indecent books. This is the great pornographical class — the really common men-in-the-street and women-in-the-street. They have as great a hate and contempt of sex as the greyest Puritan, and when an appeal is made to them, they are always on the side of the angels. They insist that a film-heroine shall be a neuter, a sexless thing of washed-out purity. They insist that real sex-feeling shall only be shown by the villian or villainess, low lust. They find a Titian or a Renoir really indecent, and they don't want their wives and daughters to see it.

Why ? Because they have the grey disease of sex-hatred, coupled with the yellow disease of dirt-lust. The sex functions and the excrementory functions in the human body work so close together, yet they are, so to speak, utterly different in direction. Sex is a creative flow, the excrementory flow is towards dissolution, de-creation, if we may use such a word. In the really healthy human being the distinction between the two is instant, our profoundest instincts are perhaps our instincts of opposition between the two flows.

But in the degraded human being the deep instincts have gone dead, and then the two flows become identical. *This* is the secret of really vulgar and of pornographical people : the sex flow and the excrement flow is the same thing to them. It happens when the psyche deteriorates, and the profound controlling instincts collapse. Then sex is dirt and dirt is sex, and sexual excitement becomes a playing with dirt, and any sign of sex in a woman becomes a show of her dirt. This is the condition of the common, vulgar human being whose name is legion,

and who lifts his voice and it is the Vox populi, vox Dei. And this is the source of all pornography.

And for this reason we must admit that *Jane Eyre* or Wagner's *Tristan* are much nearer to pornography than is Boccaccio. Wagner and Charlotte Brontë were both in the state where the strongest instincts have collapsed, and sex has become something slightly obscene, to be wallowed in, but despised. Mr. Rochester's sex passion is not "respectable" till Mr. Rochester is burned, blinded, disfigured and reduced to helpless dependence. Then, thoroughly humbled and humiliated, it may be merely admitted. All the previous titillations are slightly indecent, as in *Pamela* or *The Mill on the Floss* or *Anna Karenina.* As soon as there is sex excitement with a desire to spite the sexual feeling, to humiliate it and degrade it, the element of pornography enters.

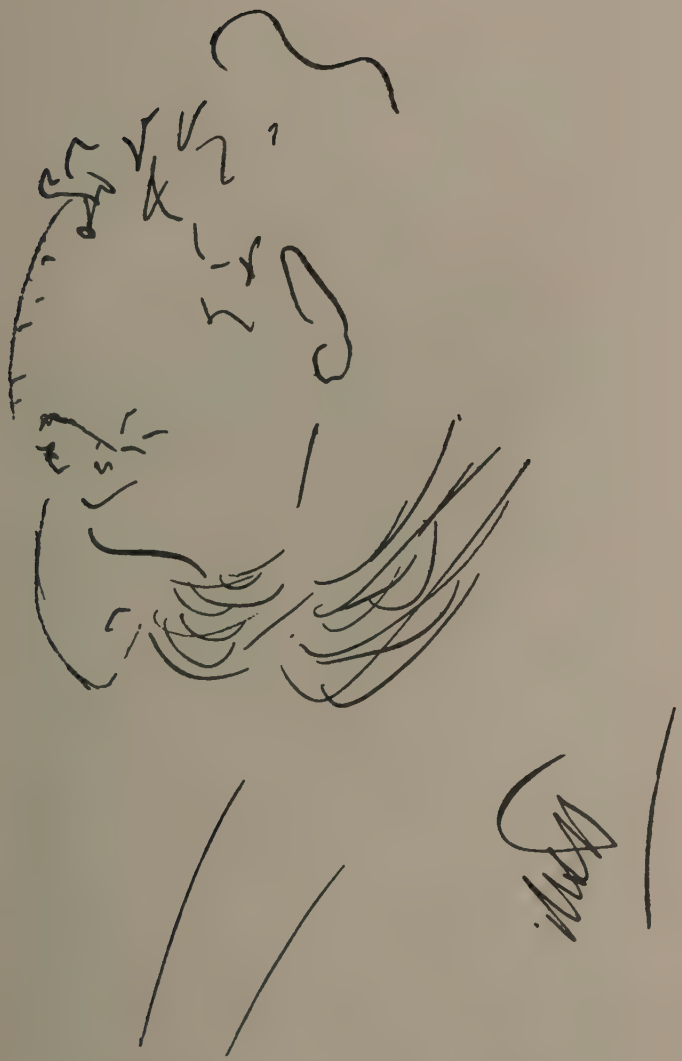
For this reason, there is an element of pornography in nearly all nineteenth century literature and very many so-called pure people have a nasty pornographical side to them, and never was the pornographical appetite stronger than it is today. It is a sign of a diseased condition of the body politic. But the way to treat the disease is to come out into the open with sex and sex stimulus. The real pornographer truly dislikes Boccaccio, because the fresh healthy naturalness of the Italian story-teller makes the modern pornographical shrimp feel the dirty worm he is. Today Boccaccio should be given to everybody young or old, to read if they like. Only a natural fresh openness about sex will do any good, now we are being swamped by secret or semi-secret pornography. And perhaps the Renaissance story-tellers, Boccaccio, Lasca and the rest, are the best antidote we can find now, just as more plasters of Puritanism are the most harmful remedy we can resort to.

# *THE MOUNT*

by

Léonie Adams

*"No, I have tempered haste,"*
*The joyous traveller said,*
*"The steed has passed me now,*
*Whose hurrying hooves I fled.*
*My spectre rides thereon,*
*I learned what mount he has,*
*Upon what summers fed;*
*And wept to know again,*
*Beneath the saddle swung,*
*Treasure for whose great theft*
*This breast was wrung.*
*His bridle bells sang out.*
*I could not tell their chime,*
*So brilliantly he rings,*
*But called his name as Time.*
*His bin was morning light,*
*Those straws which gild his bed.*
*Are of the fallen west.*
*Although green lands consume*
*Beneath their burning tread,*
*In everlasting bright,*
*His hooves have rest.*



Caricature, *by the late Myron T. Herrick.*

# Mr. DOTTERY'S TROUSERS

by

T. F. Powys

Robert Lovelace, in the story, had only one wish in life — to get girls. Mr. Truggin, the sexton of Tadnol, had more wishes than that, but when he set his heart upon getting anything, he had as many schemes in his head as ever Squire Lovelace had when he was after Clarissa. In one way Mr. Truggin was wiser than Lovelace; he would wait his chance; he did not push his plots too far. He waited, and what he wanted would be sure to come to him.

It happened one day that a misfortune ovèrtook Mr. Truggin's best Sunday trousers. They had required a button, and Mrs. Truggin had carried them downstairs. But by a sad mischance, or a slight absentmindedness, she had put them into the ragbag instead of into her workbasket. Mr. Fancy, who collected the bag, had called that morning, and had driven off with the bag for which he had given Mrs. Truggin two pennies.

When she discovered her mistake, she told her husband, who left the grave he was digging, dropped his spade at the bottom, and hurried after Mr. Fancy. He caught him up in the lane and begged him to give him back the trousers. Mr. Fancy shook his head.

"There baint none here," he said, and shook out the bag. Only rags rolled out. Mr. Truggin looked at Mr. Fancy's legs.

"Thee be wearing them," he shouted.

"No," said Mr. Fancy, smiling, "these be my funeral ones, for when I visit a sexton's cottage I must look mournful. I put on these trousers at half past six this morning, and I be proud of them."

Mr. Fancy smiled. Truggin turned away.

"When a man do buy anything, 'tis his own," called Mr. Fancy, before Mr. Truggin was out of hearing.

Mr. Truggin walked home. What was taken from him he meant to replace. When he met in the village any man wearing a good pair of trousers, he looked upon them as his own, and waited.

Mr. Truggin had borne his loss for nearly a month when, one night, Mr. Toole, the landlord of the Tadnol Arms, locked the inn door. Mr. Toole locked the door more thoughtfully than usual, because his wife, Emma, was outside.

The revellers of the evening shouted and quarrelled in the lane, Mr. Spenke took off his coat and shook his first at the moon. The sound of noisy voices moved at a slow pace down the lane. Mr. Toole shook his head and smiled.

Presently a lightly hurrying footfall was heard in the innyard, coming to the door. This was followed by heavier steps that moved out into the lane. The heavy footsteps belonged to John Card; he was come from the cartshed behind the innyard. The lighter footsteps belonged to a young woman, Mr. Toole's wife.

Mr. Toole unlocked the door, his wife pushed him aside happily, as a woman pushes a man that she is fond of, and went into the kitchen. Mr. Toole sat down by the table; when his wife displeased him, he would tell her so at once.

"John Card did bide wi' 'ee in cartshed and never came in to drink nothing, and that baint business," he said.

Mrs. Toole smiled. She brushed some dust from her clothes, raising them a little, and fastened a hook in her blouse. She looked both pretty and merry, and her husband was pleased with her.

" 'Tis thee's saucy ways that do draw in they men," Mr. Toole said. "But trade be trade," he added more sternly, "and if thee do bide about out-of-doors wi' John Card, when 'e should be drinking within, 'tis a sorrowful sin."

Emma Toole poked the fire, a bright flame started up that coloured her face with a red glow.

"I do know," said Mr. Toole, looking at her with admiration, "that God's laws be different for landlord than for other folk, but this baint no beerhouse where drink mid be drunk out-of-doors. 'Taint right for John to take thee into shed, when parlour bar be open."

Mrs. Toole gave him no answer, but she softly went to the till and dropped in five single shillings, one after another.

" 'Tis for five quarts that John do owe 'ee for," she said.

Mr. Toole kissed his wife very lovingly.

" 'Tis a young woman to be proud of," he said. "Thee do know trade from naughtiness. When a man do pay 'is debt, 'tis proper to be kind, and there baint never no harm in a good customer, for what be all trade in this great and learned country," exclaimed Mr. Toole, striking the table with his great fist, "but a giving and a taking, and what woman be the worse for being a free trader ?"

Upon the kitchen floor there were two strips of carpet. Mrs. Toole looked at them sadly. Mr. Toole scratched his leg. "'Tis there where the fleas do come from," he said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Toole, "and 'tis Farmer Spenke who do bring them."

"Hang they carpets on line," said Mr. Toole.

Mrs. Toole nodded.

It must have been Mr. Truggin, who always got what he wished for, that made Mrs. Toole look at the carpet, and also caused the flea to bite Mr. Toole, for nothing goes by chance in the world.

The next morning Mrs. Toole fastened the strips of carpet upon the line, and raised them to their highest limit. She gave the carpets a shake and passing the cartshed before she went indoors, she peeped in. There was a bundle of straw in the corner that Emma smiled at...

Sometimes a person, used to contemplative enquiry, will walk through a village and notice two or three men talking together, and will naturally wonder what is the subject of their conversation.

John Card, Farmer Spenke and Sexton Truggin were standing during the evening of the day after Mrs. Toole had hung the two strips of carpet upon the line, at the edge of the green, each one having a foot in the gutter. They had stood there for an hour by the Shelton church clock, and it is pleasant for us, who like to hear of such things, to know what they were talking of.

"I baint no good observer of devils," said Mr. Truggin, "but this I do know, that they sometimes turn themselves into hares and crows, and 'tis often said that they do fancy a woman."

"Maybe a very old devil do wear trousers," said Farmer Spenke, suggestively.

"Certainly 'twere no man's wear that I did see hanging from Emma Toole's clothesline, from hillside, when I was at work," said John Card.

"'Tis a sad thing, John," said Mr. Truggin, "that this sight 'ave so troubled 'ee, but didn't 'ee go no nearer to see what sort of trousers they were?"

Mr. Card looked up at a bough of a tree, as if he wished he had hanged himself upon it.

"Yes, yes, I did go nearer," he said, "for when I did come down from hill, where shepherd do feed 'is flock, I did stand and loiter beside Inn gate."

"For to get a sight of thee's young married woman," laughed Farmer Spenke.

"No, to see they great trousers," replied Mr. Card, with a deep sigh.

"And what did 'ee see ?" asked Mr. Truggin.

"The weather was dirty," said Mr. Card. "Clouds of mist, like old Croot's beard, curled around hill, and I did plainly see upon the clothesline a pair of enormous trousers."

"The Devil's," said Mr. Truggin.

"I fear so," murmured John Card, "but what be they trousers there for ?"

" 'Tis most likely," observed Mr. Truggin, reflectively "that the Devil have only one pair, and when 'e do stay at Inn, and his courting habits be well-known, he do force Emma to wash what he do wear."

"Who would have thought," moaned Mr. Card, "that so nice a maiden — and she be only that, though she be married — would have taken up with such an ugly monster."

" 'Tis what they do do," remarked Mr. Truggin, carelessly, "for the younger and the prettier that a maid be, the more her fancy do always run after some nasty thing, some dirty tramp who don't pay no rates, — and what else be the Devil but a wanderer ?"

Mr. Card turned and walked off in a hurry.

"Where be going to ?" asked Truggin.

"To river," cried Mr. Card, "to drown meself."

"The Reverend Silas Dottery be the man to save thee from drowning," called out Truggin, holding John Card by the coat, "and 'e be the one to get rid of the Devil, too."

"How so ?" enquired John Card.

" 'Tis like this," said Mr. Truggin. "Every devil — and especially the old one who do tousle Mrs. Emma in cartshed," — John Card winced — "do like to wear," continued Mr. Truggin, "what do belong to a good religious man, — a man who do drink wine and read Greek."

" 'Twould be hard to find such a one," said John.

"Not in our village," said Mr. Truggin, "for Mr. Dottery do drink and read, turn 'imself round, and do read and drink."

"But if I do get they holy trousers," said John Card, mournfully, "and the old devil do fancy they instead of 'is own, 'tisn't likely 'e'll leave Emma, who be always so kind."

"Devils be proud," said Mr. Truggin.

"How do you know that ?" asked Mr. Card.

"I did come upon one," replied Mr. Truggin, innocently, "spying about churchyard, when poor Mother Spenke were buried, and waiting for her soul. 'E were a little dizzied for 'twas a merry funeral and lost 'is way in graveyard."

" 'Taint much to carry to hell, an old woman's soul baint," I did say.

"'Tis a poor wear for a fine devil same as thee be, and they young naughty witches wouldn't fancy thee wi' she, but go with another."

"I must steal something," the Devil said.

"There be a fine black gown hung up in vestry — 'twas one that Mr. Dottery told I to burn. Wear that to Hell."

"And did he ?" asked Mr. Card.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Truggin, "and 'e hadn't gone above five minutes when an angel came by and carried Mother Spenke's soul to Heaven. And thee may be sure that if wold Devil, who do sleep at Inn lying wi' 'is horned head in Emma's lap, ('Oh!' cried

John, in torment) "if 'e do once get they blessed trousers upon him, he'll go to Hell and be seen no more."

"I will go and beg for they sacred trousers," said John Card.

"And when thee do get them, thee must do this," said Mr. Truggin. "Spread out they trousers in churchyard grass, and the Devil will see them. — And the next morning they'll be gone."...

There is something about the air of a quiet country parsonage that causes many a good man to wish for the hour of eating to come. Under the shadow of a church, and in the near neighbourhood of the bones of the dead, a worthy man may get as good a stomach as on the high seas, or upon the open downs, and with a better prospect of filling it.

The Reverend Silas Dottery, the Rector of Tadnol, was a learned man, but, like a good many more who know neither Greek nor Latin, he would grow hungry when dinner-time came. Mrs. Taste, the Rectory housekeeper, served her master's dinner in almost royal abundance. There was a noble salmon — poached that very morning from the Tadnol river and sold to Mrs. Taste for a pretty penny, — a rich soup, to give a proper beginning to the dinner, a small leg of Portland lamb, a rice pudding, sardines on toast, a great Stilton cheese, a fine pineapple and crisp juicy nuts.

During the time of the Rector's dining, Mr. Card sat in the Rectory kitchen, growing more and more impatient as the hands of the clock moved. A lover is indeed in constant torment, for his thoughts never let him alone.

There was, John believed, a horrid devil, whom Emma was kind to, allowing herself to be kissed by him. John Card looked at the rice pudding that had just been taken out. He wished that he had gone straight to the Inn and boldly told the husband that

he harboured an ugly thing. But the Devil no doubt drank his spirits neat. And what landlord objects to a stern drinker, whatever his doings are ?

"Baint this supper, tea, breakfast and dinner never going to end ?" said Mr. Card, "for I have a question to ask his Reverence, that be very important."

"A gentleman must dine," said Mrs. Taste.

"But do this happen every day ?" asked Mr. Card.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Taste, neatly placing sprigs of parsley round the cheese. "And I trust, if God be willing, it always will. But what is it, Mr. Card, that you wish to see my master about ?"

"Only a pair of trousers," said Mr. Card, with a sigh.

"I fear he has none to give away," observed Mrs. Taste, prudently.

Mr. Card sighed again, yet more dolefully. "But I must see him," he said. "Baint 'e finished wi' they large nuts ?"

A bell rang, and Mr. Dottery was heard moving in a careful and correct manner to his study, carrying with him, in order to save Mrs. Taste the trouble, a decanter and glass. Mrs. Taste went softly and knocked at his door. She was invited to come in.

"John Card wishes to see you, sir," said Mrs. Taste, viewing her master with a loving respect. "He wants you to give him a pair of trousers."

"Let him have them," answered Mr. Dottery, taking up a copy of Thucydides, "and give him a glass of wine too." Mrs. Taste retired but soon returned.

"He says if you don't see him, he'll drown himself," she said.

"Not in wine, I hope," said Mr. Dottery, starting up and looking alarmed. "Ask him in, Mrs. Taste. Set a chair ready."

Mr. Dottery stood up to receive his visitor, who might have been an archbishop.

"Pray take a chair, Mr. Card," said the clergyman. "I hope you have dined."

"Yes," replied John Card, a little sadly, remembering that the heel of cheese that his wife had given him at one o'clock had been both rat-bitten and mouldy.

"Tell me what it is I can do for you," said Mr. Dottery kindly.

"I do want a woman," said Mr. Card.

"Poor man," said Mr. Dottery, "but I must thank God that amongst all my own sinful wants that is not one of them."

"Ah, but you don't know Emma," sighed Mr. Card. "Her skin be as white as a Dorset cheese."

At that moment Mr. Dottery's mind wandered. He wished to buy a modern translation of Lucretius to compare with his own rendering.

"Buy her," exclaimed Mr. Dottery.

"She be bought already," replied Mr. Card, "for 'tis the Devil's trousers that do hang up on line, and the Devil do pay for 'is drink and so do take Emma too."

Mr. Dottery frowned. That the evil one should have come to Tadnol seemed to him to be a sad accident.

"We must get rid of him," cried Mr. Dottery.

"Why, so we must," said John Card. — "And 'tis said," continued John, a little wearily, "that if a clergyman's trousers be laid on churchyard grass, that the devil will snap them up and be gone to Hell before a man say 'Damnation!' "

"You shall have them," said Mr. Dottery.

"And Emma, too, that very night-time," said John.

Mr. Dottery sipped his wine, and the port reminded him that, though to get rid of the Devil was right and proper, yet Mr. Card's behaviour in making love to Mrs. Toole seemed a little reprehensible.

"Are you a married man ?" enquired Mr. Dottery, taking for he first time that evening a little notice of his visitor.

"I have a wife," said Mr. Card, "who makes good parsnip wine."

"Then drink out of your own bottle," said Mr. Dottery sternly.

"The Devil won't let me," replied Mr. Card, "for since 'is trousers do hang there, I have a mind more than ever to do what should never be done."

"So far then," observed Mr. Dottery, with a pleased glance at Mr. Card, "God's seventh commandment had not been broken."

"Alas, no," said Mr. Card, with a deep groan, "but she did promise I next Sunday."

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Dottery, "then all's well in Heaven, for when a woman makes a promise she is sure to break it." Mr. Dottery rang the bell. "Mrs. Taste," he said, when that lady answered his ring, "this gentleman wishes for a pair of my trousers to use for a specific purpose. Give them to him with my blessing." Mr. Card went out.

While Mr. Card was at the Rectory, Mr. Truggin had visited the Inn. Truggin was a man who thought not only of his own welfare, but of that of the village. He had a mind to get, but he had a mind to get lawfully, though he had nothing to say against a little harmless merriment, that might often save a good man from a sad fate. He would prevent, if possible, anything worse than that from happening.

Mr. Truggin asked for a pint of beer and was served by Emma Toole, who looked very pretty and coy.

Mr. Truggin talked to her for a while in a low tone. Mrs. Toole replied to him in a like manner, and when Mr. Truggin gave her a kiss — just to show her her danger — Emma Toole said that she would do what he advised. And Mr. Truggin himself visited

the kitchen to see that the strips of carpet were safely laid out there.

That same evening too, Mr. Dottery's second best trousers were laid on the chuchyard grass.

By the morning they were gone!

A Sunday soon comes, and Mr. Truggin performed his duties, saying Amen louder than ever, and looking down now and again with pride at his own legs.

In the evening Mr. John Card, dressed in his best, visited the Inn. That was the night when Emma had promised to yield herself to his wishes. Mr. Card walked warily. He believed in the Devil's pride and had little doubt but that he was even now showing off his fine trousers to the little imps of Hell. Though, as he walked up the lane to the Inn, he wished he had taken the angel's advice who appeared to Tobias, and carried in a small frying-pan the heart, the liver, and the gall of a fish, so that he might make a smoke with it and drive the Devil away, in case he still lingered.

Mr. Card wondered, as he came near the cartshed, what luck he should have. Should he find Emma looking for a nest of eggs in the shed ? No, she was not there, but she was not far away, for she was drawing a bucket of water from the well. John Card helped her. Never had he seen her look so tempting! He viewed her with pained delight, as she leant down to fetch up the bucket.

Mr. Toole was nowhere to be seen. John Card rattled some shillings in his pocket, and whispered to Emma that he had a small debt to pay her, and would settle it in the cartshed.

As soon as they were there John Card noticed that Emma's face wore a more serious look than it was wont to do when happy dalliance was likely to be the order of the day.

"You know," said Emma, and John Card thought

her tone a great deal too solemn for the occasion, "you know Mr. Card, that I have had a visitor."

"But 'e be gone," laughed John Card.

"Yes, to Heaven," said Emma.

Mr. Card stared at her.

"'Tweren't t'other ?" he said in a low whisper.

"Yes, it were," said Emma, in a lighter tone. "It was God 'imself."

Mr. Card shuddered.

"And what did He come for ?" he asked.

"To taste our beer," replied Emma.

"And nothing else ?" asked John.

"Yes, he brought a message for thee."

"And what were it?" asked John.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," replied Emma.

"But He never said nothing against the beer, did He ?" enquired John.

"He drank it," said Emma.

"And the trousers ?"

"He gave they to Sexton Truggin."

Animal Study, *by Joseph Hecht.*

# *HOMUNCULUS*

by

Pierre Loving

*When I was born my mother said to me,*
*"Bring tears, bring hate to women. Yet there's one*
*Whose abracadabra'll net you utterly :*
*Her spinning-wheel whirls round, though nothing's [spun.*
"Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*She said, "Lad, live your Casanoviana*
*Along the highroad. Be lionlike! Be mean!*
*Some woman will capsize the miracle of Cana :*
*Wine will gleam water, gallantry wax clean.*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*My mother cried, "Get a bravura sword,*
*A unicorn whose breath is waggish fumes,*
*Spurs snatched from burning bushes... Cross no ford!*
*And you must wear a coxcomb, oat-blond plumes.*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*"Let them not blind you, shear you, make you*
*[human :*
*There's an old tale tangled in the beards of Jews*
*Of how great Jahveh groaned* peccavi... *Woman*
*Was at the font of it, of every ruse*
*Whereby He sought, in peccadillo dews*
*And rains, to snare a figure with a cruse*
*Returning from her father's cistern. Woman*
*Is privy to the gods. Be you Prometheus!*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*"There is an eastern tale (but you must listen)*
*Of how fecundity destroyed a man.*
*Alone, he journeyed where the rice fields glisten*
*Due east and jungleward, and spied the Khar*
*Leap to the plain where all the generations are*
*As kindred to the roc and cockatrice,*

*And drouth flicks through the spearhead groves of*
*[spice :*
*There goddess Kelah reigns, near Kho and Khar,*
*Rivers that bless the mother-womb of rice.*

*"He rested, saying. 'Sacred rivers, I*
*Have trod beyond the ictus of the sky*
*In search of what I surely cannot know.'*
*For answer came the watery cry of Kho;*
*And Kelah split his breast, a rice-seed in her bow.*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*"His woman labor heard him cry a cry*
*Long after he had been in rut like any beast;*

*And what he brought forth was a fertile eye...*
*But I have other hopes for you : a wyvern I,*
*Who suckles you to come to love as to a feast.*

*"My son, his travail heard him cry a cry.*
*(Beware of Kelah with the rice-seed in her bow*
*Whose teeming horn will pierce your loin or thigh*
*And tumble you into the sacred Kho).*
*— A hiss, and you are one with earth and sky.*
*One with the planet-making milk on high.*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*"Spring, if you hear a delta voice in harps,*
*A ram's horn blowing and a Kelah drum,*
*From any woman's arms. The river warps*
*Its way, a cord to bind the jug-mouthed sky*
*To earth, athirst for rainy verities*
*That pour down music out of Kingdom Come.*

Burn without heat, tire your felicity,
Ay, grieve not the Lord with benedicite."

*My mother kissed me on both cheeks, having ended.*
*She took a crazyquilt of patched green meadow,*
*Blue woods, seven stars in a fjord. "This must be*
*[mended,"*
*She said. I saw her torso melt into her shadow.*

# SAINT THOMAS AND THE PILGRIMS

by

Hendrik Willem Van Loon

Now is the summer of our discontent! The merciful winter had given us beauty and solitude. Then — warm weather, daffodils, flies and tourists.

Happy, thrice happy, the people of the ancient land of Goshen! They were visited by many plagues. But one form of misery was withheld from their long-suffering hamlet. They never heard the honk of the sight-seeing horn. They never had to submit to the visitation of "three days on the Continent, including all trips and visits to places of interest, for two pounds and two shillings. Tea, six-pence extra."

Of course, as a sensible person, as a man of a broad and tolerant view upon life and living, I ought to welcome these caravans of progress. Did not immortal Seneca declare "travel, voyage and a change of place" to be the most agreeable short-cut to renewed vigor and strength? And do I not receive by every morning's mail at least one dozen multi-colored booklets, devised, composed and printed for no other purpose than to convince me of the "broadening" and "cultural" effects of visits to the Taj Mahal, the falls of Mumbo Nianza and the coral reefs of Greenland?

And have I not, as matter of fact, misspent the greater part of my useless days between the wheels of

a railroad carriage or between the iron boards of a steam-driven scow ?

Then why this despair whenever I hear the siren call with which the conductor of the Red Juggernaut collects his wandering charges ? Why these shivers when the four-plus descends upon the land and the streets are littered with the discarded "aitches" of our brethren from across the North Sea ?

I really could not tell you, but I expect that it has something to do with the basic snobbishness of all those who were born long before the War.

In those days, " people" travelled too.

But then, those "people" were our own "people ". Their ways were our ways, and their code was our code. Often enough it was an idiotic code. Not infrequently it was both stupid and ugly. But it consisted of certain manners and certain mannerisms and certain prejudices and certain modes of behaviour which were familiar to all of us. It gave us a feeling of close kinship. We were all members of the same club. Whereas today, whenever we venture forth, we may be asked to behave according to the rules of the late Marquis of Queensberry or to those laid down by the Elders of some Presbyterian Witenagemot in the darkest hinterland of Ohio.

That of course is very confusing and so the wise ones (including of course myself) either stay at home or venture forth during the so-called intermediary season. That means that we must be prepared to withstand rainstorms in Rome and frozen watermains in Florence. But what are a few colds, compared to the fury of the Amalgamated Sign-Painters' Travel Club, come to France to study "economic conditions" along the rue Pigalle? Or the Exodus of a group of Seventh Day Adventists in the general direction of the so-called Holy Land ?

What had often puzzled me during these last years was the question : "Who started this thing, anyhow?" And then one day, by the merest chance, I discovered. Some one was extolling the virtues of the British Navy and regretting the absence of similar virtues in the sailors of all other nations, ending with the noble assertion that "no Britisher, least of all a British Mariner, had ever left a comrade in the lurch, et cetera, tralala, tralala, et cetera."

Now as a rule I do not take part in such conversations, for what would be the use ? Nationalism, with all its pathetic bragging, will certainly be with us for another fifty or hundred years, and there are more useful things do do in this world than to debate upon the respective merits and demerits of the races that grace God's oil-dripping foot-stool. But I am also a receptacle of a considerable if ill-assorted amount of historical information and so I casually remarked : "Quite so, quite so. For further information, ask Henry Hudson, Captain Cook and the Prince Imperial." Then there followed a debate upon the exact circumstances of the demise of the late James Cook and as we could not agree upon the precise manner in which the former haberdasher's apprentice was killed, I suggested that we look it up in the Britannica. As I was supposed to have the best eyesight among those present, I was requested to conduct the investigation, and report what I discovered.

Now, as probably most of my readers know, those of us who spend the greater part of our working hours reading other people's books (that we may eventually write one of our own) get a strange sort of "feel" for the printed page. Just as the highly-trained doorman of a club, by a single passing glance at a board containing thousands of names, will

tell you : "No, Sir, Mr. H. C. Jones isn't in just now," so an experienced proof-reader or journalist will be able to absorb the contents of a printed page while turning the leaves of a book or newspaper. I have not acquired that art as thoroughly as some of my colleagues and can only do half a page at a time, but while looking for Cook, James, and rapidly passing from Convulsions and Conway to Cookey and Colic and while still in the Cook belt, I was suddenly struck in a most unpleasant fashion by the word "temperance". Surely this could not refer to a Captain of His Majesty's Navy during the second half of the eighteenth century. I looked again and behold ! it was Thomas, and not James who had dallied with the carbonated monster and who had tried to convince the world that what had been good enough for his Saviour was not good enough for him. For Thomas, born thirty years or so after his famous namesake had been consumed by the natives of Kealakekua Beach, was a professional abstainer and (as I discovered to my not inconsiderable surprise) had begun his career as editor of a little monthly bulletin entitled "The Children's Temperance Magazine" as you may verify for yourself by going to the British Museum and looking through the files of the year of grace and cold mutton, 1840.

The conversion of this good man took place in the year 1836, and it would be interesting to know the exact reasons why this Somas was changed into a Thomas, for one can do a terrible lot of drinking in twenty-eight years. But the Britannica does not mention this fact and I have been unable to lay my hands upon a "Life and Letters" of the great pioneer of peregrination.

Remains the curious change from the editorship of a magazine devoted to teetotalism to the position of

Leading Man in the field of International Travel. But this metamorphosis came about in a most natural fastion and it grew directly out of the hydropathic necessities of the early forties when Archbishop Sumner (is there something in a name, after all?) first gained the support of his dear Sovereign for the great cause of alcoholic continence.

In those days the world was really disgustingly drunken and something had to be done about it. Something was being done about it. The movement (why write fiction when we have history?) had been started in Ireland, of all places, and had then swept across England and Wales. The enthusiasm was intense and since enthusiasm, like cholera, plague and other ailments of the human race depends for its continued success upon the presence of vast multitudes, the leaders of the new Crusade decided to hold a series of popular rallies and wisely decreed that such assemblies be convened in the provinces, far away from the possible interruption of civic scoffers and metropolitan cynics.

They chose as the scene for their holy conclave the good town of Loughborough in Leicestershire where the Church of All Saints seemed to give the gathering a sort of non-sectarian and pentecostal tinge which was very fitting for a movement that meant to encompass all the nations of the world, "including the Scandinavians." Then arose the question how to get the vast multitudes that were being expected to Loughborough and back home again with the least possible loss of life and limb and six-pence.

Then up rose Thomas and behold! the thing was done. He went to the directors of the Midland Counties Railway Company and persuaded them to do an unheard of thing and run something called a "special train" from Leicestershire to Loughborough.

July fifth of the year 1840 was the day and the cost of the round trip was one shilling, or twenty-five cents, in the coin of righteousness.

On that first occasion, Thomas Cook had five hundred and seventy customers. The affair was a success and that is how the trouble started. For soon afterwards we hear of Mr. Cook as an organizer of wholesale travel in the employment of the aforementioned Midland Counties Railway. Ten years later, when the Great Exhibition took place, (the same exhibition that gave rise to the craze for crystal palaces), almost 200,000 people visited the metropolis under the guidance of Mr. Cook.

Soon afterwards came the famous Paris Exhibition of 1855 when the brave allies tried to forget their Crimean worries, while contemplating the virtue of one Queen and the beauty of one Empress (the respective husbands were also present, but were not considered to be of great importance) and we find Mr. Cook running round-trips from his native bailiwick to Calais for the modest sum of six dollars. Until the year 1863, when the Swiss were regarded as sufficiently civilized to have their native mountains turned into a pleasure resort for all the world, when brother Cook bade a bold farewell to all his English connections and began to devote himself exclusively to the export of his itinerant fellow-countrymen to the sinful hinterland of the European continent.

But as the English (as is well known) are a godly race, it seemed wicked that they should disport themselves gaily among the gaudy scenes of Interlaken and Lauterbrunnen while the placid picturesqueness of Bethlehem (Pal., not Penn.) and Jerusalem lay neglected. Hence Mr. Cook cast an inquisitive eye upon the hills beyond Jaffa and in the year 1869 the Holy Land was made safe for tourist travel.

Came the year 1870 when it was the turn of the Germans to march upon the French with the result that Switzerland was temporarily closed to the tourist traffic. In the first place, the French railroads were even worse than usual and in the second place, all the Swiss waiters had been mobilized to intercept the retreating hordes of General Bourbaki. New outlets had to be found for the excess energy of Mr. Cook's customers, and in that way, the Mediterranean was added to the Cook's folders.

By the time that peace had been declared, the fame of the British house had spread to the other side of the ocean and the first American "privately conducted tour" from over-seas made its appearance in the French capital in the guise of a delegation of American Freemasons.

This trip was a success, like everything else the diligent Derbyshireman touched and when in the year 1882 Arabi Pasha raised the foolish slogan of "Egypt for the Egyptians", the former temperance organizer turned to the more lucrative business of conveying troops and wounded to and from the mouth of the Nile and accomplished this task in so excellent a fashion that two years later he was called upon to conduct another Man of God, the late Charles George Gordon, to his ultimate reward at the hands of the Mahdi's wild dervishes.

That, as far as I know, ended the firm's interest in actual warfare. Today it is merely a Messenger of Goodwill and hotel coupons. And I am willing to add from personal experience that never in my life have I dealt with an organization that was as intelligent, as liberal and as cussedly honest as the House that Cook built. Furthermore it would be folly to blame the excellent Thomas for the curious development of modern travel. If it had not been Thomas,

it would have been some Richard or Henry. The masses were beginning to get sufficient leisure to find themselves occasionally obliged to spend a few minutes in the company of their own thoughts. They quite naturally were horrified and looked for a means of escape. Travel was an ideal outlet. They might neither know nor care whither they were bound, but at least they were on their way. That most of their "activity" was merely a sort of spiritual St. Vitus' dance did not interest them. The Professors were there to tell them that travel broadened the mind and, thank God, museums closed some time and there were the evenings, and possibilities... And best of all, there was the moment of the triumphant return to the home town and the amiable prospect of spending long winter evenings reminding the wife of that terribly funny Frenchman, "who tried to do us out of ten cents that day in Cannes," and the German, "who thought we spoke his damn language" and "do you remember the fuss that Wop conductor made when we had got into the wrong train with the wrong ticket?" All of which leads us to the question we might have asked at the beginning of this article : What is it all about ? Why do people, possessed of perfectly good homes allow themselves to be crammed into uncomfortable cubicles on unsteady ships, eat uncustomary meals at strange hours, and spend their evenings sitting awkwardly in the ghastly halls of shoddy hotels ?

Why indeed ?

Well, the answer is so simple that I am almost ashamed to proffer it. All those honest burghers and their equally honest wives and their terrible children are victims of the most deadly of modern maladies — the morbus taediosus. They are bored. They are most hopelessly bored. Their ancestors escaped from

this hideous blight by venturing forth into the realm of the spirit, by exploring Heaven and Hell and making forays into the unlimited domains of metaphysics. They returned just as baffled and just as dejected as the majority of their progeny. An occasional one discovered ways and means to stupefy his sense of reality by the mystical weeds he had plucked at the foot of the pearly gate, but the average citizen, then as now, came back no wiser or happier (though considerably poorer), than he had been at the moment of departure.

Then came the age of the great scientific discoveries. After a couple of centuries, the different verities composed of mathematical formulas, chemical combinations and speculations which the true pioneers of the human race had distilled in the quiet of their laboratories began to dawn slowly upon the non-thinking part of the community. And these poor devils found themselves rudely deprived of their ancient hunting-grounds. Heaven and Hell became symbols and ceased to have the properties of a celestial Switzerland and an infernal Yellowstone Park. Baedecker's handbook took the place of Dante's old and trusted "Guide to the Underworld" while the Carte Michelin put the Livre des Heures out of business.

But man remained the same. He could change his shoes and his travelling coat, but he could not change his mind. And incapable of finding happiness within himself and cut off from his former means of escape, he declared the tangible world to be his private park and sent for a ton of folders and a barrel of travel literature.

In the beginning, at least, he kept up the pretence that he was going to foreign parts to acquire the new grace which cometh with the pursuit of culture. He

dutifully looked at the Winged Victory, walked weary miles through the frozen halls of the Prado and the Louvre, listened to the guide of the British Museum explaining that the word was pronounced "Elgin, not Eljin, Madame. The g is hard in Greek," and wished to God that the Rijksmuseum did not have quite so many rooms. But he is beginning to waver. Here and there he listens to ribald young voices which loudly proclaim that the Raphael Bar in the Corso San Morone interests them more than the Raphael Madonna in the Palazzo Municipale. He is beginning to backslide and though he may proceed to Monte Carlo with every honest intention of visiting the deep-sea fishes and his Cro-Magnon cousins, he will almost invariably discover that all the roads lead to the Casino and that the blue and white chips of the reigning serenissimus are more enticing company than the all-too-transparent jelly-fishes which the House of Grimaldi used to collect in the days when it was still fashionable for ruling sovereigns to be able to read and write.

The spirit of Saint Thomas still hovers over the landscape and tries to beguile the honest pilgrim with visions of "educational excursions" which will show him everything in this world worth seeing from the way in which the pious friars of the Grand Saint Bernard kill their winter supply of hogs to the manner in which the civilized nations of Europe, not so very long ago, did murder upon each other. But the voice of the Evil One is also heard within the land and it sweetly pipes : "You poor idiot! You are bored. You left home because you were bored, and now you are bored again. Why not confess it? Why continue to fool yourself? What you want is not a museum but a circus. Now, let me show you ! Want a guide?

A guide, Sir ? Show you all the sights of Timbuctoo! Guide! Guide!"

And the answer ?

There isn't any.

God created man after His own image. He worked six days, got bored with what He had done and left for parts unknown and has never been heard of since.

Man, less fortunate, finds himself unable to leave his terrestrial prison. But he will closely try to follow the divine example. If he can not wander through the universe to stifle his yawns, he can at least trot and trot and trot around our little planet.

World without end and boredom everlasting! Amen!

# *PER ALTA AD ASPERA*

by

Humbert Wolfe

*Observe creation mercifully hidden*
*either in an imaginary Eden,*
*or buried in some absent-minded spasm*
*of a self-generated protoplasm.*
*Or see how wisps of gas collect, congeal,*
*burn, and through space first shudderingly reel,*
*then, cooling, burst and crackle, like a dumpling,*
*now sweating into seas, in mountains crumpling,*
*with trees and grass, a vegetable mould*
*proof of corruption and the blood run cold.*
*And after this like maggots or the weevil*
*a million forms, but every one of evil,*
*crawl on the skin, destroying as they grow,*
*the failing source of life from which they flow,*
*till after feather, fin and fur at last*
*in folly first, as in all else surpassed,*
*mankind appears, when time contrives to shape*
*a fallen angel from a risen ape.*

*Darwin — an eminent Victorian —*
*caused some alarm by noticing that man*
*was apelike in his origins — a bungle*
*of fish and something hairy in a jungle.*
*Adam, this worthy proved, was not God's flunkey*
*announcing him in Eden, but a monkey.*
*A generation, quietly aware*
*of its own virtue, did not greatly care,*

*but left it to the bishops and the thinkers*
*to prove that God Himself made use of blinkers.*
*And not in vain. The Church advised the masses*
*to take the judgment of their looking-glasses.*
*Was it not plain that faces marred with labour,*
*each more distorted than its patient neighbour,*
*that bodies crippled in the holy task*
*of working any hours greed might ask,*
*and spirits learning from their native hovel*
*that poverty's whole duty is to grovel*
*were such as must beyond all question prove*
*the operation of Immortal Love,*
*which in this withered flesh and twisted bone meant*
*to glorify vicarious atonement?*
*Nor were the statemen slow in Russian blood*
*to seal man's evangelic brotherhood,*
*and claim (with truth) that Inkerman had shown*
*that men content (in quarrels not their own)*
*to starve and perish in a frozen heap*
*descended not from monkeys but from sheep.*
*Nor did the poets choose this time to be dumb,*
*but asked the world, as specialists in freedom,*
*if here where, broadening down, the thing became*
*everyone's property, no one's aim,*
*the liberty of conscience and of thought*
*(the right i.e. to think the things they ought)*
*were to be lost without a struggle, or*
*were they the fellows that they took them for*
*pledged to the view that Englishmen were free*
*(if in naught else) to choose their family tree.*
*Let other nations, German, French and Turk,*
*listen to reason! Britons would not shirk,*
*but seeing Eden everywhere about them*
*(indeed could Eden be conceived without them?)*
*would plump for Adam, saying with quiet verve*
*men have the ancestors that they deserve.*

Portrait of Valerie Taylor, *by Ruby Boardman.*

# Dr. BREAKEY OPPOSES UNION

by

Graeme Taylor

In Montreal the sight of a priest is not unusual. A reminder of older times, however, seems to cling to the long black robes, and suggests some incongruity to the spectator when the priest is passing through the ornate lobby of a modern hotel of the American style. But the rugged, powerfully built man who was emerging from a corridor off Peacock Alley of the Windsor Hotel, though his long black overcoat with its silk frogs and collar and lining of black lamb suggested the presence of a soutane beneath, was not a French-Canadian priest, nor, as his face might lead one to think, an Irish recruit to one of the orders prospering in Canada. An easel, bearing an announcement that those attending the Rotary Club luncheon would be addressed by the Rev. Cyrus Breakey, D. D., had not yet been removed from the entrance to the corridor from which the Rev. Cyrus Breakey, Minister to the Scots Presbyterian Church, now emerged; and if the Minister's hard eyes flickered on the placard for but a moment, it was sufficient time for him to calculate the size of the letters with which his name was written.

The Rev. Cyrus Breakey had addressed the members of the Rotary Club, and was going to the doors of the hotel to summon a taxi. As nothing of interest

is going to happen to him until he reaches his home, an opportunity to give some further information is presented.

As the minister's features and complexion proclaimed him, he was of Highland stock, a Nova Scotian. From that small province have come many of the teachers, divines, lawyers, and writers of the Dominion. This may be the result of the intercourse the inhabitants have had from earliest times with the Americans of New England, as if at the American Revolution some of Boston's traditions were carried to Halifax along with the records of the Puritan colony; or, it may be that in two similarly dour and devout populaces an uncompromising climate developed similar aspirations — for there are detractors who say that because the terms are so hard by which a living can be wrung out of the soil or drawn out of the sea, the inhabitants of the Maritime Provinces determine to fight their way into the sedentary and academic professions. Be this as it may, Cyrus Breakey's career furnishes an example of the bluenose tradition.

He was born in a bleak farmhouse near a small fishing village on the shore of the Bay of Fundy, and his education at the institutions he attended successively in New Glasgow, Montreal, and Edinburgh, had been achieved by much sacrifice on his own part as well as on the part of his parents and sisters. He was forty-five years old when called to the Scots Presbyterian Church in Montreal. His parents had died some years before this event, but they had had the comfort of witnessing his marriage with the young daughter of one of the pillars of his Quebec congregation.

Soon after his arrival in Montreal to take up his duties with his new congregation, Cyrus Breakey

bought a house in Cypress Street. This house had been built to suit the tastes of an eccentric bachelor, and after his death it had stood on sale for a long time. Cyrus Breakey and his wife were childless, so the small number of rooms in a house of its size and price had not deterred them from taking it. He had had a few doubts as to the house being quite suitable for a divine : it was more like the home of a successful painter or architect. But the low price was a great inducement, and he fancied that when he got his books and typewriter into the room he chose for a study, a different atmosphere would be created. Most of the former occupant's furniture he took with the house, as he realized that it would cost a small fortune to replace the really handsome violet portieres, huge window-hangings, tapestries and rugs.

Having dismissed the taxi, Cyrus Breakey rang the bell at the outer door of this house, and entering the glassed-in porch, trod heavily up the red-carpeted steps. The door at the top was opened by a young Scotch maid wearing a maroon-coloured linen uniform and white apron, the absence of a cap being explained by the minister's detestation of such badges of servitude. She waited deferentially to take his hat and overcoat.

In passing along the hall Cyrus Breakey hesitated at the door of the reception room, listening for a moment to assure himself that no one was there.

He pressed the red and slightly freckled knuckles of his hand against his mouth. "Wretched food those fellows eat, Margaret," he said. "You might have thought it a luncheon for bridge-playing women."

Was there anything she could get for Dr. Breakey, Margaret asked.

"A pasty," he suggested. "If you can find such a

delicacy as a meat pasty, Margaret, it would be just the thing."

He would have it in the dining-room, he told her. With a smile that showed no lips and few of his teeth he watched Margaret leave to fetch the pasty. He then descended the four stairs to the dining-room and, going to the heavily carved sideboard, poured out a quarter-tumblerful of rich-looking, golden whisky.

But for the furnishings, the room Cyrus Breakey was standing in had more the appearance of a private chapel than of a dining-room. The ceiling, rough-finished in plaster and without moulding, tapered up to a conical dome. Where the ceiling would have been in a room of ordinary large proportions, there was a gallery — the landing passage of the staircase. This gallery was banked with boxes of ferns and balustraded by a crimson velvet rope.

A faint circle of powdery plaster, chalky white on the shining sideboard, led Cyrus Breakey to look up and see that the plaster came from under the support at one end of the velvet rope. And when he looked up at the gallery he discovered that his wife had been there scrutinizing him from the time he had entered the dining-room.

"Josephine!" murmured Cyrus Breakey.

"I want to speak to you."

"I'll come up," he replied. "But I have asked Margaret to bring me... Ah, here she is now." He broke off as Margaret entered the room. "That will do nicely, Margaret," he said, dismissing her.

"I fared wretchedly at that luncheon; and I have a burial to do later in the afternoon." He felt extremely uncomfortable having to throw his head back in order to see his wife, and wished that she would not stand there gaping at him but would either

come down if she had something to say, or leave the gallery until he had finished his whisky and pie.

She remained in the gallery, looking down on him. She was a tall, well-developed woman of thirty-five, with a great deal of dark hair, a clear skin that still retained some of its former rosiness, and dark eyes. The eyes, too closely set, and brooding, seemed out of place in a countenance whose other features gave every indication of docility.

"The meeting is tonight, Cyrus?" She spoke in her customary monotone.

"Yes, yes," he answered, his tone signifying that he did not care to discuss the matter with her.

"What do you intend to do?"

"Make my position known, of course." He set his glass sharply down on the sideboard.

"You have considered what that may mean if the majority in the congregation is not behind you? Are you sure they are opposed to the union?"

"I don't care if they are not. Am I to betray my church into the hands of the Methodists or any other financially and spiritually bankrupt denomination!"

"It's a good charge..."

"The interest I take might lead one to suppose that I am perfectly aware of that."

"I was warning you — that was all — to look to your future."

"Carpe diem — a woman's reading of the future! Quite apart from my personal convictions — which in any circumstances would lead me to oppose any form of this suggested union — material considerations also show my course to be the wise one. If the union does come about, the Presbyterian Church will be smaller, but stronger: a number of the old fogies will go out, and they'll never have the face to

come back. But many of the members who go out will gradually come back, and we'll be as strong as ever. And then it will be the ministers of my age who remained steadfast who will lead."

Leaning slightly forward, his wife returned the smile: "But as far as you are concerned, I must warn you. There is something of which you are as yet unaware."

"Oh," Cyrus Breakey laughed, "and is it something *you* can tell me!"

"It is. If you were to lose your charge you would not have my money for your support."

Cyrus Breakey stepped back a pace.

"I shall leave Montreal," she continued, before he had time to speak. "You can say that I have gone to visit my mother. We can make all other arrangements later. No, don't come up!"

"My dear Josephine, you must see the absurdity of the situation! I say nothing of the absurdity of the conversation we've been having. Indeed, I feel reassured as to your intentions: if you were serious you would not confront me with such a communication in the positions in which you see us here! I'm too old to play Romeo, however charming your Juliet may be."

"You would prefer the positions to be reversed... They are, for the first time since I have known you."

"Josephine, this is undignified."

"I think it is the first sign of possessing dignity that I have ever shown."

Cyrus Breakey began to pace to and from his glass on the sideboard: "Why have you done this? Is it a joke! If so, let me tell you I consider it a very misplaced one."

"I'm afraid that it may prove a very sorry joke

for you. A minister so intolerable that his wife cannot live with him gets talked about. I had intended to avoid this scene, to leave without saying anything to you. But this church-union question led me to warn you. I thought I was jeopardizing your future enough; and that when you knew about it you would be careful not to imperil it more by taking a side in opposition to the majority in your congregation."

"But your very forethought, my dear, shows that you could not think of a separation between us."

"No, if it shows anything it is that I was too generous to wish for the ruin of everything you sacrificed my life for. I don't want to talk about it — I was young, undeveloped certainly, but I might have had some life of my own if you had not taken me for a footstool to raise yourself on. I suppose you don't deny that I had a life?"

"We all have lives," said Cyrus Breakey.

"No. You don't truly believe there is anyone whose life is half so important as your own."

A small lump of plaster fell at Cyrus Breakey's feet. He looked up.

"Josephine, consider well, before you act on any hasty impulse. I will grant you that we might perhaps try to build our life together, anew."

Her anger suddenly burst forth: "You fool!"

She saw the look of self-control and close-lipped determination that came over her husband's face — it was as if he was confident that she would never leave. She pulled sharply at the swaying velvet rope and, realizing what had happened, tried to hold on to the slender wooden pedestal. The last thing she saw was the bald, glistening forehead of her husband below.

The members of the Scots Presbyterian Church stood with their pastor and voted against Church-Union. They made the Rev. Cyrus Breakey testimonials of their sympathy on the death of his wife. Among those of the congregation who were inclined to give an ear to gossip, there was some doubt as to whether she had really met her death by accident; Cyrus Breakey had confided to one or two staunch friends that he himself had a fearful doubt: his wife's family had all been church-goers, but their fervour had on occasion been known to influence their reason, as in the case of her grandfather, who had spent the last seven years of his life in bed with an umbrella over his head — the unhappy victim of some hallucination concerning the plague of frogs.

# WHAT LOVE MEANT TO ISADORA DUNCAN

by

George Seldes

As she danced, that evening, many years ago, she created for my adolescent eyes, all the beauty and the grandeur that was the golden age of Greece. A glorious Diana. A chaste Aphrodite. I was very young then, a police reporter with literary ambitions, and I fell beautifully in love, I thought, with Isadora Duncan.

Almost two decades passed. What time's ravages have done to me I cannot see, but I can never forget the shock of seeing my goddess lying large and bleary, puffed, frowsy, and dishevelled across a bed in a second-class Berlin hotel room from which she could not get away because she did not have the money to pay her bill. She did not greet me.

"If only I had one little drink I could manage to speak to you," she remarked dimly.

I rang for the waiter. He came untipped and growling. I asked whether she preferred wine or a cocktail.

"Bring me a quart of gin," she said in a voice suddenly steady.

"Are you going to pay for this?" the waiter asked me in an over-loud whisper.

I put my hand on my pocketbook. He approved.

She swallowed the gin straight, revived at once, and at times incoherently, at time lucidly, told me her present troubles.

"I'm at the end of my rope," she said. "I can't go to France to sell my house — the French say I'm a Bolshevik and won't give me a visa. I'll have to sell my love letters — it's all I have left — I've at least a thousand — I don't mind. Ever since I got into trouble because of my work in Russia and my last tour in America, I found I had no friends in the world, so why should I hesitate about publishing these letters? Oh, they're going go ruin a lot of fat reputations, but why should I worry? Do you want to see them?"

She moved her body, adjusted a wrap over the loose semi-Greek red garment which hung shapelessly from her shoulders, wobbled about in her sandalled feet, and pulled a drawer open. Her hair was mussed and there was a strange luster in her marvelous eyes.

"These are from d'Annunzio," she said handing me some blue papers written in a large florid style, some twenty words to the page. "And these from Gordon Craig." The pages were not written but drawn. Every letter was a work of art, like the words on old Japanese prints. And each page was embellished with drawings in ink and crayon. Some were drawings with only a scattering of text; some were words and pictures intermingled as one beautiful work.

"And these are Lohengrin — very prosy — a business man's hard handwriting. Here are some from — well, I won't tell you the name now. He was my lover once, young and beautiful. Now he's married and has three children and writes no more great poetry".

I looked at the text of a score of letters from old lovers. Whether written by artist, poet or business man, the letters were, each one, aflame with the same passion which she provoked in men. The dates were at least ten years apart. Yet the thought which occurred in each one was the same.

"You are as precious and beautiful to me today as in the first hour of our passion — you are the only woman in the world for whom my desire was not cooled by possession!" The poet, the artist and the business man each expressed the same idea in phrases differing in style and elegance.

"Yessenin's are in Russian," she said. "You won't understand them, but they are just as beautiful as the rest."

"Where is he ?" I asked.

"Serge has gone into the Caucasus to become a bandit. He wrote me recently that he is crazy to get thrills. He says he will be a robber and then write poetry about it."

"And your divorce ?"

"Well, it's this way," Isadora replied, "in order to get a divorce in Russia it is necessary to file your application before twelve o'clock noon, but neither Serge nor I could ever get to the Divorce Commissariat by noon. We lived at night and slept by day. Now if the Soviets had had sense enough to open their divorce bureau at twelve midnight we would have been divorced and probably remarried several times very nicely."

She helped herself to a quarter tumblerful of gin.

"I think I'll put them all in a book. I'll call it : 'What Love Means to Different Men'— the poet, the banker, the playwright, the poor man, the idle rich. I'll group the letters under these headings. It'll make an interesting book, made up of real human documents."

The chapter she dictated at my suggestion follows:

"I find it difficult to write this book. I find it hard to speak when I know that every word is being taken down. I want this book to be something worth leaving behind. It will only be worth doing if it is a book which will help people to live. I want to tell the truth about my loves and my art because the whole world is absolutely brought up on lies. We are fed on nothing but lies. We begin with lies and half our lives at least we live with lies. Most human beings today waste some twenty-five to thirty years of their lives before they break through the actual and conventional lies which surround them.

"I am not an artist at all. Artists bore me to death. All the singers you meet talking about the A flats they can reach — all the violinists and pianists talking about the size of their audiences and the writers about the size of their royalties. They give me no pleasure at all, these artists are stupid. At a concert the only artist present is the man who wrote the music they produce; at a play, the author of the text. Theater artists are silly and egotistical persons. All artists as a rule are much overrated.

"Art is not necessary at all. All that is necessary to make this world a better place to live in is to love — to love as Christ loved, as Buddha loved.

"That was the most marvellous thing about Lenin: *he* really loved mankind. Others loved themselves, money, theories, power : Lenin loved his fellow men. They say to me, 'How can you be so enthusiastic about Lenin — he did not believe in God.' I reply : 'That is simply a phrase. Lenin was God, as Christ was God, because God is Love and Christ and Lenin were all Love!'

"Do *you* love mankind ? Lenin did. That's why he was supreme because he really loved. When the world once really understands this it will be a tre-

mendous thing because most people really love nothing.

"And that is why I want to publish this book — not for money — but because I want to show mankind it does not know how to love.

"What mankind calls Love is only hatred in another form. In the flesh there is no love. I have had as much as anyone of that sort of thing which men dare call Love — men foaming at the mouth — men crying they would kill themselves if I didn't return their love. Love — rot ! I had just barely come to the stage when it began — these declarations of love. From all sides I was besieged by all sorts of men. What did they want ? Their feelings, I know now, were the feelings they have for a bottle of whiskey. They say to the bottle 'I'm thirsty. I want you. I want to drink you up. I want to possess all of you!' To me they said the same things. 'I am hungry. I want you. I want to possess you body and soul.' Oh, they usually add the soul, when they plead for the body !

"Was that love ? No. It was hysteria.

"Love is the rarest thing in the world. Even a mother's love is largely egotistical. A cat loves her kittens up to a certain age. People talk of a mother's love as the most sacred thing in the world. Why, it is just like loving your own arms and legs; it is simply loving a part of yourself. That is not the love I wanted, I wanted a pure unselfish love, the love for humanity felt by Christ and Buddha and Lenin.

"When I was in Moscow I saw little children lying huddled asleep in doorways and on rubbish heaps. Would this be possible if there was love in the world? I took these children into my school and let them sleep there. After Lenin died the Soviet Government would no longer allow this. Was that love ? Did you ever go to the East Side of London ? What

did you see there ? If you did not see children actually sleeping in the streets as in Russia, you must have seen them under conditions terrible enough. If there is such a thing as love in the world, would people allow this sort of thing ? Could they go to their comfortable homes knowing that there are children living in such distress ? So long as little children are allowed to suffer, there is no true love in this world.

"Men have loved me but my only love has been children. All scientific men, all doctors, are amazed at what I have accomplished with children. First of all, I take them very seriously. All children are very serious beings despite the fact their parents and their teachers treat them as ignorant and inconsequential little animals. They come to me with all sorts of troubles, mental and physical. Many have rickets and bone disease. When I started my first school in Berlin, Geheimrat Professor Doctor Stoffer came to look at my pupils, and when he saw them he exclaimed, 'These children are not for you. They are for me — they are in need of surgical care. This is not a school, it is a hospital. You will never make these children dance.'

"And you should have seen the children dance after a year! Simply because I let them do what they liked. I let them dance, I did not ask them to dance. Then I inspired them to better dancing, that is all. They grew and thrived and blossomed.

"Of course even this love may be egotistical, after all. There is nothing like it! It makes you feel a sort of god, you know. Prometheus ! It is marvellous to be able to form human lives ! I have taken these children from the lowest proletariat, weak and diseased and destined to misery and early death — the children of men who dig ditches and break stones on the highways, and before I left Moscow they were dancing in the Grand Opera. Seeing them the people

arose and cheered while they wept, and both the men and women of the audience and the lovely children on the stage felt a divine ecstacy, a touch of that great love which the world needs and without which it will die.

"Once you are interested in shaping children's lives, you will never be interested in anything else again. There is nothing greater in the world. I have never taken a grown-up pupil nor a paying one. I worked only when I could work for nothing.

"The world calls me a dancer. It says I have revived the classic art of dancing of the Greek era. But I am not a dancer. I never *danced* a step in my life. I hate all dancing. All I see in what people call dancing is merely a useless agitation of the arms and legs. I don't like to look at stage dancing. But I can understand ball-room dancing — the tango, for instance, as danced in Buenos Aires. It is quite wonderful there, in the little cafés with the low ceilings; it has a meaning. The man dances with the same girl all the evening, and if another man tries to dance with her he runs a dagger through the stranger's back. This is the sort of dancing based on sexual desire and the right of possession. We see all the outward movement. But what of the inward movement, the movement of the mind ? I am not a dancer. What I am interested in doing is finding and expressing a new form of life. The Greeks lived. People do not live nowadays — they get about ten per cent out of life. My aim was to teach children — to live, to get more out of life, to inspire them to use the present movement always and to shape their lives contentedly and harmoniously.

"I see only the ideal. But no ideals have ever been fully successful on this earth. Ideals always bring calamities in their wake. People with ideals frequently are driven mad. You follow an ideal, devote your life to it and you may go mad — yet what else

is there? Everything else is like having a good meal. It passes the time in a very charming manner and satisfies one of the principal desires of the flesh. That is all.

"Every two thousand years there come certain phases in human conditions and certain forces renew themselves. Ideals incarnate. We have had Dionysius and Christ and Buddha, and the great force of the present epoch is Lenin. I am certain that in a thousand years from now people from all parts of the world will come to Lenin's tomb. It will be a shrine. He was the person who embodied the new spirit, the renewal of the force of idealism and the new religion. I am a sort of Cassandra and I prophesy now and then.

"I went to Russia because I am interested more in the future than the present. A practical person going to Moscow sees almost nothing save calamity and catastrophe. This condition followed the crucifixion of Christ and must follow Lenin. In ages from now people will realise this. Now they see only what is taking place at the moment. I see the Ideal."

The next day the stenographer who took the foregoing brought me the transcript and asked to be paid.

"I don't like her ideas," she said, "and I can't permit myself to work with a woman who drinks gin."

I went to see Isadora and told her that. She poured out another drink with a good humored smile.

"I'll tell you how I got this way," she said, "It is prenatal influence. Have you ever heard of the Kearney Riots in San Francisco? That was the first Bolshevik uprising in America. My father was a banker in San Francisco, an upright and honest man.

"But the mob came surging up the street yelling, 'Hang Duncan! Down with Duncan!' and they broke into our house looking for father.

"Mother hid him in a clothes cabinet and when the mob came into her room and saw that she was pregnant they called the lynching off. When mother had released father from the smothering cabinet she collapsed and was in bed for months. The doctors prescribed oysters, caviar and champagne. Then I was born. Now you can understand my strange and expensive tastes."

When I asked her to write another chapter for her book, she suddenly became indifferent to the project and tried to drop the subject.

"Look here," she said, "you've already published something about my selling my love letters. Well, I received some telegrams about that. Certain persons are much worried about the publication of these letters. I am sending a friend to France to see about it. I'll 'phone you if I decide to go on with it."

Days went by. No telephone call came. I called and got no satisfactory answer — usually a nasty remark from the operator in the hotel where the Duncan bill was growing larger daily.

A week later I called. Everything was in commotion. Smiling maids were packing a new trunk, and Isadora, arrayed in new clothes, was languidly and happily superintending.

"I'm going to Spa," she said, before I could speak. "To take the cure. I've quit drinking. I'm too fat, but I'll reduce in no time. I'm going to have a theater again. I'm going to Nice for the winter. Oh, you must come and see me at my first performance."

"And your book — and the letters — ?"

"Oh, that's all finished! Publish my memoirs now? What do you think I am ? An old woman ? Am I dead ? Only the dead publish their memoirs. Why, I'll have time enough when I'm dead to write them. Everything is changed now. Life begins again — "

That winter and another winter passed and a summer came. At Juan-les-Pins I heard that Isadora Duncan had returned to her studio-theater in Nice. I asked one of her friends who was backing the theater.

"It's a funny story," the friend vouchsafed. "It seems that Isadora was down and out in Berlin once and told some reporter she was preparing to publish her memoirs including her love letters. Then she was very angry because that got into the papers, but it certainly was lucky for her it did, because some gentlemen saw the paper and telegraphed her that she was foolish, because it would ruin her career; that she had better return to her art. They would get her a studio if she wished. And so everything has been fine for her ever since."

The theater was hung in deep purple velvet. The stage, piled with hundreds of cushions, was prepared for seating the audience: a piano stood in the otherwise empty parquet. Isadora arrived in the same loose robe she had worn to lunch, a Greek robe lovely on a slim goddess, but revealing rather than concealing the enormous breasts, the distended stomach and the wide hips of a woman prematurely old. Her once expressive arms were thick and blotched, the flesh of her face hung in folds, and her hair was badly streaked with purple and red henna.

She pulled the narrow velvet covering from the piano, and with ancient deftness threw one end over her shoulder and began encircling her body with the rest. At the same time her Russian accompanist began playing. Then a strange thing happened — I think it happened to all who were there because afterward we each admitted in a different way something of the surprise and thrill that took possession of us. For we had witnessed a miracle. Before our eyes a middle-aged woman, much the worse for wear

in a hard relentless world, suddenly became transfigured into something beautiful, exultant, unworldly. She did not dance — as she had danced twenty years earlier when I saw her Spring Song. She moved, slightly, slowly. Her face grew beatific and kept changing its expression with the music. Her arms, legs and body swayed; her head rose and fell, and out of her eyes a light seemed to shine, a light which blinded us completely to the flaccid ugliness of aging flesh and weakening human features. It was not a dance, it was an interpretation of music as some Greek artist might have presented before Sophocles, to prove to him that irony and pity could be expressed by the dance as deeply as by the great tragedies, and inducing in the audience the same catharsis.

It was a strange beauty that we beheld, a beauty "into which the soul with all its maladies has passed". Not to Monna Lisa, who seems simple, naive and fixed in her expression, but to Monna Isadora should later have been inscribed this purplest passage, for Isadora's, that afternoon, was the head "upon which all the ends of the world are come, and the eyelids are a little weary." In her face that day I perceived that "all the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle ages with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias —"

Then the music stopped, Isadora stopped, the miracle stopped. The mystic circle was broken. There was silence. We were too much moved to applaud or praise. We merely got up and walked with her into the house.

# *A POEM*

by

Richard Aldington

*What is done, is done.*
*Yet since the past*
*exists in us alone,*
*might we not change it?*

*Every day, you thought,*
*is a smooth ivory plaque*
*you carve at will?*
*Old errors force the pattern*
*to their form.*
*Most damnably the past controls us.*

*Even the mind's not free.*
*These low ambiguous hills,*
*these vapid fields,*
*these opulent bourgeois trees,*
*impede all energy,*
*dictate a placid impotence.*

*Neither acceptance nor revolt*
*alters the inevitable line.*
*I say you are not free.*

*You thought a fertile mind*
*and sterile flesh*
*implied some mastery ?*

*Mere cowardice*
*inherent from the womb.*
*And are you proud*
*of your mind's fruits ?*
*What you will do or be*
*you cannot tell,*
*yet your most desperate act*
*and weakest thought*
*are not your own.*

# *INTRODUCTION TO A PROJECTED HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE*

by

Ludwig Lewisohn

## I

Wherever thoughtful people gather anywhere in the western world their talk, leaving sooner or later the vexing questions of war and peace or food and oil, drifts toward books. Except among the technically lettered this talk will rarely deal with methods or forms or kinds. Aesthetic considerations may arise. But readers, wiser in this than critics, stick to the work of art in its totality as substance, as life projected and interpreted by a significant personality. They seek in books both light and guidance, both precept and example, not after the way of old seekers after exact laws in a fixed and finished world, but as inquirers and fellow workers, as themselves creators in this vast and intricate business of human experience.

Sometime near the middle of the Nineteenth Century an old crack in that rigid shell which was supposed to represent the universe suddenly burst and vistas opened racing into the infinite past and the infinite future. Space joined time in being unimaginable. Authoritative wisdom became as dust. What Lucretius suspected and Gœthe prophetically saw was

revealed to thousands; within the past three quarters of a century it has been revealed to millions. A new type of reader arose — one to whom literature was no longer an elegant diversion or an illustration of the foreknown and fixed, but moral research, a road to salvation, the bread of life.

In all matters of this sort practice comes before either theory or conscious knowledge. The process is slow. It must have been very gradually that men and women, their faith in scripture and churchly tradition beginning to be shaken, came to expect of secular literature more than the amusement of an idle hour or the agreeable confirmation of what they already knew and believed. A strong minority, to be sure, had always sought instruction in books; a few readers here and there must, since the days of Montaigne, have approached creative literature in an inquiring temper. Broadly speaking it remains true that the modern attitude to the written word could not and did not arise until scripture had become literature and literature scripture. It is undeniable that numerous classes of readers still regard books as either a pastime or as an illustration of their antecedent certainties. For these classes it is not illogical to demand that a censorship suppress or an Index condemn books which, conflicting with their antecedent certainties, they must conceive of as false and therefore harmful. Nor are there lacking other survivals: the aesthetes, descendants of the "amateurs of elegant composition", who dislike plays and novels of ideas; the rhetoricians whose verbal games recall the feeble dabbling of the Byzantines and the later builders of acrostics. But the serious modern artist writes for neither Fundamentalists nor for the elegant and the trivial. He addresses himself to that reader to whom the creative records of the human spirit are a religion, a new binding of himself

to his kind through the intercommunication, the enlargement and clarification of experience that are offered by the written word.

## II

The change which has come over the attitude of intelligent people to literature is of great, of ultimate importance. Yet much criticism and all of literary history is written as though we still lived in the tight and thoroughly explored little cosmos of our ancestors and as though the psychology of the writer were still that of the minstrel, the purveyor of information or the adorner of pious legend. The minstrel is still with us. But his name is Edward Guest; so is the writer of pious legends and his name is Harold Bell Wright. These names and the qualities that they recall suffice to illustrate how enormous is the cleavage between the past and the present. The difference between the ox-cart and the aeroplane is not as great nor as fundamental as the difference between the peasant listener to a border ballad of revenge and blood or a reader of Robert Service on the one hand and, on the other, one who absorbedly ponders *Of Human Bondage*, *An American Tragedy*, *The Magic Mountain*.

Wherein does that vast difference primarily reside? In this : that in every age previous to our own there was supposed to exist a body of knowledge, whether recorded or traditional, whether legal or revealed, which was assumed to be closed, final and infallible. Greece and Judaea were exceptions. There the human spirit went through a development analogous to our own and Plato and Euripides, Amos and Isaiah were, the former intellectual, the latter moral revolutionaries. But the Latin Christian tradition knew no

exception until the coming of the scientific age. All that man needed to know of metaphysics or morals, all of speculation concerning vital and final issues, was fixed and closed. Hence literature was by the very nature of things confined to the tale and the homily, to providing a pastime or a lesson. This limitation favored the art of poetry which is unapt at inquiry; the *Divine Comedy* is as perfect and complete as a cathedral, as rounded and seamless as the Christian universe which it illustrates; *Faust* is like a series of granite boulders strewn on a plain that melts into an infinite horizon. Between the days of Dante and Goethe the great and unparalleled change had come. Tradition and authority had broken down; slowly, painfully science was striving to rebuild a forever imperfect cosmos on an inhuman and unimaginable scale. This is forgotten by the aesthetes who yearn feebly for great works in verse. Those works were not accidents. They grew out of a world of their own, a world that is forever gone.

The writers of the Christian centuries, even of the renaissance and beyond, were entirely conscious of their situation and even the most enlightened among them gave to this situation their intellectual assent. Sidney, of course, defended poetry as being "a treasure-house of science" and as fit to commemorate the deeds of one's ancestors and the praises of one's gods. But the classical passage on the whole matter, a passage quite neglected hitherto, is to be found in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. "Creative literature", Bacon writes, "is nothing else but feigned history, which may be styled as well in prose as in verse. The use of this feigned history hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being in proportion inferior to the

soul... History propoundeth the successes of issues and actions not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore Poesy feigns them more just in retribution and more according to revealed Providence... for that *tendeth to demonstrate and illustrate that which is taught or delivered.*" Surely there is no more brilliant and telling commentary upon the history of civilization than that the best mind of the English renaissance, the founder of the inductive sciences is, in his demands upon literature, precisely at one with the Babbitt and the shopgirl of today: he wants happy endings and life with moralistic sugar-coatings in order that plays and stories may feign life to be what, according to tradition and convention, it ought to be. Literature in brief was neither to teach nor to deliver; it was to "illustrate that which is taught and delivered." But the enlightened modern reader has no "revealed Providence" to fall back on. Literature must teach and deliver in a new and flexible sense or it is meaningless. Scripture, I may repeat, having become literature, it was necessary for literature to become scripture.

Doubts of that older theory of letters struck sensitive and disillusioned minds from time to time. There is an unconscious pathos in that sentence of La Bruyère : "A man born a Christian and a Frenchman finds himself constrained in the matter of satire; the great subjects are forbidden him." But the overshadowing right wing was struck by no doubts and impeded by no hesitations. As late as 1820 no less a man than Walter Scott could write these words: "The best that can be hoped is that novels may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment and tales of fictitious woe. Beyond this they are a mere

elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life... and are read much more for amusement than with the least hope of deriving instruction from them." Amusement or instruction! Scott, even when contemplating the works of Fielding could get no further than the Horatian tag :

aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae.

Of the free creative process by which the poet sees and reinterprets the universe anew for his contemporaries Scott had no inkling. Tory and Christian, all that is greatest in literature was antecedently tied up and completed for him in law, tradition and scripture. Minstrelsy was left him, tales to illustrate what he accepted as "taught and delivered" concerning the traditional virtues and gallantries of men. It would have been inconceivable to him to inquire what, in a boundless and changing world, was the nature of true virtue and gallantry. Minstrelsy and historical information. In the creation of character he occasionally transcended his own views. Reflectively he never wavered from the mediaeval notion of secular literature as consisting of the tale and the homily alone.

## III

Yet the old bondage of literature to authority had been attacked long before. It was in 1759 that Edward Young wrote his autonishing *Conjectures on Original Composition* and anounced to an unhearing world the organic character of the work of art : "It grows, it is not made", and the true relations of the writer to his great predecessors: "The less we copy the renowned ancients, we shall resemble them the more." The implications of which Young was not always clearly conscious are obvious : from the whole

body of human experience the writer absorbs, forms and transmits as art to the reader what he has seen and felt and known. Literature, in other words, has become more and more lyrical and subjective in both origin and appeal. The renaissance impulse, the Protestant and democratic revolutions all tended to make a separate entity of the individual, to differentiate man from man, to create individual impulse and need and vision. What troubled the classicists and conservatives throughout that long romantic period in which all our modern origins are rooted was the question : if literature is so personal in source and character, what becomes of its appeal to mankind? If it clings wholly to the concrete, how shall it express the typical and the universal? In a hundred sayings in verse and prose Goethe answered this question with sovereign finality. He who was scientist as well as poet, the first great poet to see the universe as free and becoming, solved that difficulty in theory as all good modern literature solves it in fact : "True symbolism arises wherever the particular represents the general, not as dream and shadow, but as a living and instantaneous revelation of the inscrutable." The thing is so self-evident, once it is expressed. If the individual phenomenon did not lead to all things cosmos would be chaos, science would be impossible, the sum of things a discontinuous heap. The poet in his intensest subjectivity speaks for and to his fellows and his equals. The novel, the typical modern art-form is exactly what Goethe called it, "a subjective epic"; yet no form in any age has spoken to men so widely and so profoundly. It was Goethe who also defined poetically but exactly the relation of the modern reader to the maker of literature : "Even at the moment of our highest happiness or of our deepest wretchedness we stand in need of the artist." And it is abundantly clear that this need could not

have arisen until men began to seek in secular literature that inspiration, life and light which once they had sought in scripture and authoritative tradition alone.

Amid a hundred critical battles and reactions that have taken place since Goethe's day the deep sense of the difference between modern literature in its broadest meaning and that of the past, between the modern reader and the reader of earlier ages, has never been lost and rarely blunted. From Goethe one proceeds easily to Sainte-Beuve's definition of the "passion and the seriousness which consecrate" a genuine work of art, and to the same critic's conviction that the "study of literature leads naturally to moral inquiry." One proceeds, above all, to those extraordinary intuitive sayings of Emerson which he was not always able himself to apprehend or to establish intellectually. "All men live by truth and stand in need of expression". In other words, the modern reader craves vicarious inquiry into the truth by the expression of which, by one who can speak, he must try to live. "The experience of each new age requires a new confession". Literature is no longer an art of fixed forms or contents or appropriate imitation, but an endless, ever-changing scripture and revelation, the scripture and revelation of the life of man. Deeper still and of quite ultimate significance is Emerson's remark that the poet "uses forms according to life, and not according to the form". Experience creates substance and substance creates form. The poet no longer chooses the ballad metre for a balladesque subject nor blank verse or hexameter for an idyll. He literally did that once; only the surviving purveyors of the flattest mob-amusement do it now. The source of literature is, in the memorable words of Thomas Mann, "that mysterious blending in

which suffering and the instinct for form (Leiden und Formtrieb) have become one."

Are such considerations difficult and intricate? Perhaps. But it is by avoiding them that criticism and literary scholarship and literary history are among us so often puerile and vain. We operate with concepts from before the flood. We act as though literature, the fullest and most continuous expression of the totality of man's life, had stood still in all but outward fashion, while philosophy and state-craft and science had been wholly transformed in the ever swifter torrents of time. Literature is no more what is was than the modern industrialized state is like the self-sustaining agrarian kingdoms of long ago. Man both as a living and experiencing creature and therefore as a listener or reader has undergone changes which have transmuted the very groundwork of his character and outlook. One more simple and yet very significant illustration may further clarify the differences here pointed out. In his mellow and eloquent defence of literature and philosophy Cicero, among many equally fine ones, has this passage. "Many who have been in the power of enemies and tyrants, many who have been in chains and many who have been in exile have eased their grief through the study of wisdom." What kind of wisdom was that? The grief of these men was eased by lovely and dignified maxims concerning the brevity of life and the inevitableness of evil and the dignity of bearing misfortune with courage and serenity. But modern man, who does not accept but inquire, would hardly be eased by such wisdom. For he asks: Must there be enemies? Dare there be tyrants? Has any the right to chain his fellowman? May freedom abroad not be less exile than slavery at home? He asks. He proceeds from facts to the supposed laws of those

facts and questions the laws themselves and destroys, if only by the hardihood of impassioned thought, a world and a universe in which such things can be. Stoic maxims in well-wrought verse will seem feeble and trivial and impertinent to him. The poet who speaks to and for him must have grasped with a superior power of experience and of speech the high and difficult problems of his world. Mind must touch mind and deep answer unto deep.

## IV

The error that the reader of the scientific age is identical with the listener to old lays and sermons, or with the mere student or with the amateur of polite letters has its counterpart in the graver error that the psychology of the modern poet (*) has not changed from that of his predecessors. From this error arises the manifest nonsense still heard from critics and reviewers, that a play or novel involving moral or economic or metaphysical notions is the less a play or a novel on that account, or that there is a subtle indecency in the poet's drawing upon his intimate experience of life or that the poet, abstracting himself from his total human self, shall project aesthetic values into a void. Since useful literary history

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(*) I shall use the term poet, as the Elizabethans did and the Germans and Scandinavians (*Dichter*, *digter*, have always done as applicable to the creative artist in letters irrespective of external form. The distinction based upon the mere use of prose or verse has always been dangerous and confusing; how much more so is it today when imaginative prose is assuming nearly all the functions of verse and when the boundaries between the two forms are becoming more and more obliterated. The poet — the maker or creator — is such by virtue of his inner character.

cannot be written while this mistaken notion is entertained but will remain an enumeration and description of documents without regard to their true character or value, I shall proceed first to the difficult but grateful task of clarifying the nature and the methods of the poetic or creative mind.

The history of letters, which is the deepest and most significant part of the history of civilization, reveals clearly enough three types of the poetic mind. Each of these types corresponds to a phase and to an epoch of human development. To a phase rather than to an epoch. For human development is evidently not uniform. Each period is thronged with survivals from former periods, and throw-backs will occur from time to time. Ox-carts, to use that illustration again, are found in country-lanes a hundred miles from the great flying-fields, faith-healers flourish under the shadow of institutes for medical research, Robert Service and Edward Arlington Robinson, Zane Grey and Margaret Deland and Theodore Dreiser all co-exist in time. War comes, in addition, and reduces intelligent modern poets to the level of medicine-men and tribal bards. Allowing for this chronological confusion it remains true that we have knowledge of three types of the poetic mind which, corresponding to three phases of particular civilizations as well as to three phases of civilization as a whole, may usefully if not altogether happily be called the bard, the artificer or verse-smith and the poet.

The bard is the earliest articulate man, differentiated from his fellows by nothing but that articulateness. When terror or triumph shake the tribe that terror or triumph finds in him a direct and immediate voice. He is an improvisor; he is inspired by what he believes to be the god and what is in reality a surge of group emotion. Not always clearly

differentiated from the medicine-man and the sooth-sayer, the bard is found among all primitive peoples. But we need not turn to the anthropologists for evidence. "Tragedy as well as comedy", Aristotle tells us, "derives from improvisation; the former going back to the precentors of the dithyramb, the latter to the precentor of the phallic songs, as both are still practiced in many cities." Primitive societies have their proper developments too and the bard does not remain wholly the voice of the tribe. He tends to acquire the skill of the artificer or verse-smith and develops that vocabulary of stock epithets which we find in the Homeric poems, in the Beowulf, in the Niebelungenlied, in balladry and folk-song. But his psychology remains the same and can be admirably studied in such modern war-poetry as the *Serment* of Henri de Régnier and the *Hassgesang* of Ernst Lissauer. Both of these extremely sophisticated modern poets momentarily lost their differentiated selves in a great up-rush of group passion. They were no longer themselves; they became the voices of their frightened and infuriated tribesmen. The spirit of the tribe improvised through them. Their subject, a common and immediate passion, clutched them; experience and expression were one and simultaneous.

The guess may be hazarded that the bard tended to become the artificer in periods of peace and stability. The gods demanded praise and the chiefs flattery and entertainment. Now the poet, uninspired by an immediate tribal passion, began to look for subjects from without, to select his "matter" and to present and to adorn it in a fashion to please his hearers. In societies still more complicated the artificer assumes the character of a didactic poet. He tells of olden wars and of saints' lives; he edifies and instructs and pleases. His personality counts for

little or nothing and so there arises no sense of property in the products of the mind. Mediaeval writers of romance copy and translate each other; they draw upon a common substance of Christian tale and legend and motive. They go about writing in the fashion of craftsmen. They select their subject matter from without at the dictates of custom or fashion and experience and expression are wholly divided.

Modern poets, as we have seen, can lapse back into the tribal bard. The artificer, however refined and sophisticated when compared to his mediaeval prototype, is always with us. It was he who wrote the didactic poems of the eighteenth century; it is he who, in a thousand guises but chiefly as a novelist, clutters the literature of the nineteenth century. As a poet he can rise as high as Longfellow or even as William Morris; as an essayist he can cut as creditable a figure as the late Hamilton Wright Mabie; as a teller of tales he can deceive the half-educated into thinking him spontaneous and original when he is only tricky and sentimental, like O. Henry. His constant mark is that expression in him has little to do with experience, that he chooses his subjects from without and that he strives to please or to edify, never to disturb or to arouse. He accepts all current values in politics and thought and morals. In fiction or the drama he deals uncritically with the contemporary modes of behavior and treats life as though it were a game with rules to be kept or broken. As a critic he is fond of what he calls technical considerations, unable to conceive of the creative oneness of substance and form and thus reducing the great poets to artificers in his own image. He is never influenced by the creative mind, for he does not understand its workings. But he is a great imitator and copier of meter or structure or external method or stylistic

mannerism. The bard uses a common spontaneous form, the artificer a common traditional or conventional form. He multiplies enormously with the spread of education; he crowds the popular magazines; his are the chief outer successes of the market-places of literature — the book-shop and the popular stage; he rules the trade of letters and darkens council, for he is often in the editorial office and the professor's chair. It is he who writes the far too many books which will flood and blind us one day and disgust us with literature itself. He is inevitable; he has his uses as an entertainer and a popularizer of knowledge. But no sound history of literature can now or hereafter be written that does not recognize and know and exclude him and fix its attention wholly upon the products of the creative spirit.

Of that creative spirit or eternal poet isolated examples have arisen whenever in an age or land authority was broken or transcended, personality emerged, literature became scripture and first-hand experience could project a vision which was to remould and save the world. Euripides and Plato and the Prophets of Israel belonged to that company of poets; Catullus and Lucretius belonged to it and then no one again until the early humanists began to turn their eyes from a rule and a ritual to nature and their own hearts. And even they rarely saw life at first hand but rather through the eyes of the recovered ancients and we must wait for the appearance of Montaigne to observe, though in so prosaic an example, the free play of the creative mind.

Now it is clear to everyone, except to the professed students and critics of literature, that the time from the Protestant Revolution to the Industrial Revolution, even though it is probably only the dawn of a still longer and stranger age, is the longest period of

intellectual liberty and flexibility, of the possibility, therefore, of direct and fresh human experience, in all the long annals of the race. Freedom of thought, moreover, was accompanied by freedom of movement; the machine which, today, threatens to enslave us anew, broke the hard castes of feudalism. The townsman insisted upon his human rights, next the agrarian slave. The ancestors of Keats and Hebbel were serfs sold with a parcel of land. Economic flexibility and the gradual breakdown of dogma and churchly authority were accompanied by a slow growth of moral freedom. The varieties of human experience increased in number, and heresy and travel and love and speculation became vivid possibilities to ever widening classes and groups. Hence while, for reasons I have pointed out, the number of artifices has increased in modern society, the number of true poets necessarily shows a comparable growth and many an intense small novelist today has more to communicate concerning man and nature and human life than Gottfried von Strassburg or even the great Dante. It is a question not of dimension but of quality and character and this small heresy of mine will be the commonplace of day after tomorrow.

Let anyone examine, with a mind unclouded by the traditions of the schools, two anthologies of verse: one of the Elizabethan and Jacobean lyric, one of verse in any modern language selected from the poetry of the past thirty years. The advantage of mere beauty, of piercing simplicity or hieratic splendor of speech will be clearly with the former. The advantage of subtlety and interest and significance of subject-matter will be overwhelmingly with the latter. In the former will be found a few stately or joyous or melancholy commonplaces about honor and mutability and chivalric love and the changing

seasons and the doom of death; in the latter all that deep and intricate research into the soul and the world and the relation of the two and of men to each other which has been released by the destruction of dogma and the economic and moral flexibility of our age. Yet this comparison is manifestly unfair to the moderns. For verse is not their characteristic form. Their best is found in the essay, the novel and the prose play.

Human life, in brief, has made more and more for the appearance of the creative spirit, the poet who is neither bard nor artificer. This poet who may, correctly enough, be called the modern poet, starts not like the tribal bard with a group passion that choses to speak through him nor, like the artificer, with a subject which, under certain rules and according to certain traditions, he choses deliberately and from without. He starts from an inner fact of his individual consciousness. Out of that consciousness, which is both perceiver and thing perceived, both container and content, there arises the impassioned need for the release and the communication of experience, for the liberation from that experience and its projection for the contemplation and salvation of his fellows. In the modern poet, as in the bard, experience and expression are one. But his experience is not tribal; it is wholly individual; it tends more and more to have, as one important element, a revolt from the tribal. Above all, experience and expression though indissolubly one in him are not simultaneous. Weeks, months, years will intervene between experience and expression, between what was once called inspiration and execution. For the modern poet has not chosen a subject, grateful or ungrateful, which he can determine to treat in this or that fashion. He and his subject are one. He has descended to the depth of his soul and so to the core

of the world whence, if the world is organic or even continuous, all roads must be roads to God. And now he must wait in quietude to see whether the experience which has come to him as a communicable one will grow and weave between him and the world, between subject and object, a body and a form which will leave it utterly his own and yet make it a possession of his fellowmen. During this period of gestation processes take place which can be roughly defined as the processes of condensation and of heightening. Experience is diffuse; life lags and halts; its direction is veiled to us while we are in its midst and its crucial moments can be lost to us under the attritions of our common day. Thus the creative mind condenses time and space and action and speech and gesture until experience is purged of the apparently accidental and aimless, until there arises the substance of art which is truer than what we call truth to life and more real than reality and yet unfathomably rooted in both. This process of condensation is accompanied by that heightening which makes all things and actions and thoughts clearer and intenser, which brings out their inherent significance both for the self and for the world. Thus experience assumes form, a form now at last liberated from kinds and genres and truly incomparable and unique. Under what law do these processes take place, under what informing principle closely analagous perhaps to that unknown principle according to which a thousand substances will crystalize in forms equally exquisite but each different from every other? Plainly under the informing law of the individual creative mind, conformable to its innermost nature which has its special personal relation both to all concrete things and to their sum. No wonder that Aristotle called poetry, by which he too meant imaginative creative

literature, more serious and philosophical than history. It is the core and spirit of both history and philosophy. For the poet lives with the highest awareness his day in human history; unconsciously or consciously he shapes his experience into a work which implies such a universe as he dreams or can endure or else implies the repudiation of the world and the triumph, however pessimistic, of man's spirit over the hostile gods. Amusing criticasters who blame the modern poet for being autobiographical and philosophic! What else, not being a bard and disdaining to be a mere artificer, can he be? Out of his experience, out of suffering and vision he rebuilds the world; he needs to wring its secret from it for his own release and for the salvation of his fellows. He is the poet, whether his outer form be novel, play or lyric, whom the thoughtful and instructed modern reader seeks out to experience for him, to interpret for him, to illuminate and to guide him, to face for him the inscrutable from which all older and once apparently certain messages have fallen silent.

## V

A certain poet being spoken of, Goethe quietly remarked: "He can help us no more." The saying has been called crudely utilitarian. Quite wrongly; for it is the mark of the essential poet that he continues to help us across ages, revolutions in morals, religions, economic systems. That a given writer was fashionable in his own day or brilliantly entertained his generation continues to be interesting in the antiquarian study of that day and that generation. In the history of literature conceived of as the ultimate articulateness and intercommunication of man concerning himself and his fate the works of such writers have no place. It will be found, too,

that the writers who can help us no more lack the true marks of the creative spirit. The story is well known of how accidentally, in his mature manhood, James Fenimore Cooper drifted into writing. And his strong point, quite as one should expect, is invention. But there is nothing more certain than that invention is never a mark of the creative mind and that the poets and dramatists and novelists who can still help us have relied upon common myths for the projection of their sense of life or upon the observation that is born of suffering from the world or upon the direct expression of their personal experience. Invention is the dross in writers as eminent and different as Balzac and Wassermann. Neither Euripides nor the author of Job nor Lucretius nor Shakespeare nor Molière nor Fielding nor Goethe nor Wagner nor Flaubert nor Whitman were strong in invention. Literature is expression, not tribal formulation nor an entertaining and inventive adornment of the known, the accepted, the believed. Cooper can help us no more.

I have, then, it is clear, a kind of history of literature in mind that shall limit itself to the essential expression of the spirit of man. What figures such a history of literature will choose out of the past and what figures neglect is plain enough. The scholar will at once querulously ask, however, by what process of selection the history of literature so conceived and practised will deal with the present and the immediate past. The answer is that, though there can be in the nature of things no rigid standard or sure criterion, the test I propose to apply has its peculiar chances of use and fruitfulness. The character of the poet is a thing known and ascertainable under all variations of age and form. I shall be deceived by no specious success or outer brilliancy of execution. But a concrete example is worth a page

of theory. Other critics beside myself have had their obscure doubts in contemplating a talent so magnificent and so expert as that of Mrs. Edith Wharton. Especially her earlier works seem in their structural completeness and fine intelligence of detail as though they might be built for perpetuity. Yet those obscure doubts linger and grow less obscure as one considers the sources from which all lasting art has always risen. Mrs. Wharton has never wholly liberated herself from the illusions of the world which she portrays. Her constant play of irony is a defensive gesture; her intelligence has transcended her special group and tradition and society; her heart and her instincts are with them. If the deeps arose and this social structure were to topple Mrs. Wharton, for all her wit and insight, would take her station with these snobs and wasters and players of a social game. She is above them but of them. Her tribe has never let her go. As during the war so on some day of judgment, she would adopt the superstitions of her clan and group and prefer society to the kingdom of God. One cannot be an artist and a lady. Thus Mrs. Wharton's works share, as they need not have shared, the perishableness of the society which she has chosen to portray. Let it not be objected that this judgment is moral and philosophical in character. Morals and metaphysics are only learned names for reactions that are identical with personality, character and talent. An artist's Weltanschauung is both the man and the style.

From this apparent digression I may return to what in my attempt to disengage the essentials of literature from its accidents is directly applicable to America. The history of our national expression differs from that of any other people in that our folk or bardic periods lie far away and long ago in other lands and have never been a living force among us.

Men came to America bearing with them the narrow Protestant culture of the post renaissance period. The Puritans in Massachussetts, Pastorius and his Germans in Pennsylvania and the Southern colonists to a greater extent than the Cavalier legend admits, were at one in their adherence to a view of the world according to which nearly the whole of human conduct was prescribed by dogmatic authority and all the expansive forces of life, except war and trade, identified with the realm of Satan and of sin. The margin left for art was the sermon, the chronicle and the elegy. Nor must it be forgotten how large a portion of earlier and later colonists consisted of indentured servants, of fugitives and of petty criminals. How were creative values in life or literature to be expected of people who had not been able to reach conformity with the average mores of their day? They strove, naturally, after the normal respectability of the Puritan view of life. Thus the levelling and hardening of American civilization began early. And all these people were not only largely isolated from the developmental forces of the civilization that had originally produced them; they had in their isolation and their necessary moral rigidness to confront and to live the dangerous, wild, cruel, drunken life of the wilderness and of the frontier. The life that had actually to be lived was often terribly at variance with the moral theories not insincerely professed. Thus there was added to the original opposition between the life of grace and the life of sin another and all but unexampled division between the ideal and the real, precept and practice, expression and reality, literature and life. From this division sprang the self-righteous Christian rum-merchant and slave-trader, the ancestor of the charitable business magnate of a later day. All life being in theory governed by the most stringent rules,

but the life of war and trade being left by tacit and universal consent in an outer wilderness, this society set up its strongest defences against all those varied experiences in thought and action from which art springs. From the Colonial laws which punished incontinence by brands and lashings and public confessions to the latest experiments in Prohibition enforcement, American society, true to its origin, has compensated itself for its fierce sinning against the Indian, the slave, the business competitor, by bearing down with unparalleled harshness upon all the more amiable and expansive forces of human nature. What tempted men most sorely they avenged most cruelly. Hence there arose in the course of time the pornography that justified Anthony Comstock and on the other hand the spirit in himself and the rich men who abetted him that could not distiguish between pornography and the expressiveness of art. Any attempt to speak out was felt during the greater part of the American past to be a danger and a betrayal. Nowhere else has the integration of literature with life been so suspected and feared. The only artist tolerated was the artificer who observed the rules of the social and moral game, glorified fighting and stealing and represented life as emptied of both reflection and desire. An unbalanced sense of sin soaked through the whole of existence and letters remained polite letters unintegrated with life until almost the other day. Men wrote not what they thought or believed or experienced but what, according to Puritan business morality a good and respectable man ought to experience and to believe. All books so written can help us no more; they are the monotonous documents of an age that is passing and that is not likely ever to be reborn.

Fortunately the human spirit has in it something of an undying flame. The true history of literature

in America is the history of those poets and thinkers who first in mere theory, later in both theory and practice, denied the Puritan division of experience and expression, broke the moulds of the artificer, and brought their countrymen first freedom of perception and of thought, next flexibility of conduct in pursuit of each man's idea of the good life. The story of our literature is the story of successive moral revolutions, nor has the time for severe and serene masterpieces come to us yet. The revolutions are far from won. Great masses of the American people have felt and still feel the reintegration of experience and expression to be a godless and un-American attempt to destroy their cherished tradition of the division between life and art, their frontier sense of the sinfulness of the natural and have in a hundred ways tried to tighten defensively the fighting solidarity of that degenerate Puritan view of life which has gathered power and pride from its successes in the material world. The revolutions are not yet won, but the story of them is the best record of our past and the happiest omen of our future.

Etched portrait of R. C. Dunning, *by Polia Chentoff.*

# SECRET DRINKING

by

Liam O'Flaherty

One day, while wandering in the west of Ireland, I entered a publichouse to drink a tumblerful of stout. There were some men there drinking in silence and to a foreign stranger their silence would seem odd, for the day was fine, the drink was uncommonly good and the keeper of the place looked a jovial fellow. Everything combined to make the tavern a place for merry roystering. But it was as silent as a tomb. When I entered the proprietor greeted me with a suspicious nod. The drinkers sighed, looked charily in my direction and then turned slightly away.

However, I suspected the cause of the strange silence and assuming the correct expression I casually asked the proprietor did he know such and such a man in the district. At once, everybody cocked up his ears and listened. All knew the man for whom I enquired. A long conversation followed. They asked me my name and my father's name. They knew my father. I was all right. The proprietor reached across the counter, took the remains of my stout and emptied it into the swill. He placed in front of me a powerful measure of smuggled brandy.

It was then two o'clock in the afternoon and I was going to have tea with a friend whom I had not seen for a long time and to see whom I had come a long

way. I did not leave that tavern until the sun was rising next day. I never saw the friend either then or since. But I had a glorious time.

Why? Ha! The secret of merry drinking is secrecy. I don't say actual secrecy but the illusion of secrecy. I suppose every soul in that parish knew we were there, drinking smuggled brandy but we pretended that they did not know and the pretence made us intensely happy. Brandy is a drink for which I don't care as a staple beverage, but on this occasion it was a drink that had been brought in little casks from a French fishing smack, along a quiet bay between little islets, then hauled up a dangerous path on a cliff, and brought along a wild bog road in a donkey's creels, until it was slipped into the tavern at dead of night by a back way. And here we were drinking it. It was like taking part in a revolution and without the unpleasant part of a revolution, blood, hard work and hunger.

I have tasted drink in twenty odd countries but Ireland is the only country where drinking is really a gentleman's pastime. And all because of the people's instinct for making drinking a purely male rite. In other countries people drink out in the open air, in full view of passing traffic, with their wives, daughters, sisters; just as if they were having a cup of tea. An Irishman has a natural antipathy for drinking in public and as for drinking with women... It's not done. We gave women the vote without any question but I curse the day when we give them the right to drink with us. It will ruin the country, kill all romance and put us on the same low level as the other countries that have been ruined by the appalling democracy of the twentieth century.

It's terribly intriguing when one goes to lunch or to dinner at an Irishman's house. During the meal,

you may see only water on the table or you may see wine and spirits and you may see the host offering drink to fellows with expensive faces and you'll be surprised to see fellows with expensive faces refusing anything but water. But later, when everybody is in the drawing room, you will notice an odd sort of restraint. Then suddenly you are tipped on the shoulder. You look around. The host is sneaking out of the room. He winks at you. You follow him. You find that every other man in the room is doing the same thing, sneaking out. You are brought to the host's study, into the kitchen, or into some room where the women cannot penetrate. Then an orgy of drinking, story-telling and singing begins.

I remember once coming from Punchestown races and halting at Naas to have a drink with a man whom I was driving to Dublin. We got into the secret cubby hole at the back of the hotel and began to drink there. We were discovered by a friend of mine and dragged out to a lounge, where there was a large party of police officers and army officers. We had been drinking there for four hours when suddenly one of these men struck his breast and said :

"My God! What about the ladies ?"

It appeared that they had left their women in the dining room having dinner. So a boy was sent out to tell the women to go home to Dublin and send back the cars. We stayed on far into night.

But the most exciting pastime of all is looking for drink after the taverns and hotels have been legally closed. In the country it's simple enough and not so exciting. When the moment for closing arrives, the proprietor says :

"Come on, lads. It's time to close the front door and to go into the kitchen."

Then somebody is sent out for salt fish and solid

drinking begins, until the party gets tired of drinking in comfort without danger. Then a car is fetched. The party gets into the car and off we go a long way, perhaps thirty miles, until we arrive at a tavern in some remote village. We hammer on the door or on the window. A man gets up and lets us in. He pulls on his trousers and serves us in his bare feet.

In Dublin it's more difficult and more exciting. When the taverns close at ten, we come forth with our parcels, which we take to an eating house. The parcels are usually drunk about midnight. Then a wise taxi-man is found. He sets off around back streets until he reaches some very remote place in the slums. You follow him from the taxi and stand with him with your back against the door of a publichouse. He taps ever so lightly on the door with the tips of his fingers. The sound is barely audible and yet the door opens a few inches and the proprietor asks for the order. The bottles are passed out, the money is passed in and you go away on tiptoe. There is absolutely no reason for all this humbug but it is very amusing. Sometimes, however, when the publican in question has quarelled with the local policeman, you may be arrested.

This passion for secrecy is so great that I once knew a publican (I gave up knowing him and in fact left the district in order to get away from him, because I could do no work) who pretended to sneak drinks out of his own bar. He was an unmarried man, so that there was nobody to catch him except the barmaid, who may, of course, have been his mistress and therefore his master. But even so, he used to play curious tricks on himself. It was my custom to drive into the town each morning for my mail about ten o'clock. He was waiting for me invariably outside his door, in his shirt sleeves, with his hat at the back of his head. As

soon as he saw me coming, he walked into the middle of the street, so that I had either to halt or run him down. We went into his bar and had a drink or two. If nobody else turned up I got away after half an hour. But very often some fellows turned up. Then I did not get to the post office. About mid-day, the publican swung himself over the counter into the snug among us and shouted to the barmaid to give him two bottles of whiskey and a row of glasses.

"Boys," he would say, "I'm fed up looking at you fellows buying drink in my house. Have a drink on me."

Or he would say :

"Excuse me, gentlemen, but it spoils the fun having to measure out drinks and to make change. It's more homely and sociable drinking like this out of a bottle."

Later perhaps somebody got hungry and suggested going away for a meal.

"Don't stir," the publican would say. "There's plenty of grub in the house."

He would climb over the counter and produce a huge cheese, loaves of bread, jars of pickles, tins of canned stuff, salt fish, butter; enough to feed a regiment.

How he managed to make that publichouse pay I don't know. He had other property. The funniest habit of his was leaving his house about eleven o'clock at night and then coming back with friends some hours later, to knock up the barmaid and make her serve him and his friends, all the time pretending to be a stranger.

I believe the local fanatics held a meeting of protest about that time; but I think I had left before that.

Good God! When I come to think of it... that

other publican, who insisted that the grandfather of a friend of mine had saved the life of his (the publican's) grandfather during the great famine. He was still more odd, of the type that was drinking himself sombrely to death. His place was at the foot of the mountains going to S—. He kept two rifles there and various revolvers and he allowed nobody into the house except his especial cronies.

When he got particularly drunk he used to insist on lending money to my friend.

It was really odd, drinking there in secret, behind barred doors, with the mountains looming over the gable of the house and the mad publican laughing insanely, going about with his shirt hanging.

Yes. Ireland is the only country left in Europe.

# *THE EAGLE*

by

Allen Tate

Napoleon and Cæsar
The mountainous Lee
God's wrath bestows them
Unto no mercy...

*Say never the strong heart*
*In the consuming breath*
*Cries out unto the dark*
*The skinny death :*

*Look whirring on the rind*
*Of ether the great eagle,*
*Shot out of the mind,*
*The windy apple burning*

*Hears no more past compass*
*In the bottomless flight —*
*The apple wormed, shattered*
*By the ignoring light.*

*So, faggot of the heart*
*On the cinder day —*
*The woman and the man!*
*David and Sibyl say*

*The world has a season*
*The frail globe has sinned*
*Now the prodigious autumn —*
*A black apple by the wind.*

*Think not the world spins ever*
*'Tis only the gaunt fierce bird*
*Flies, merciless with fear*
*(Only the world has a year)*

*Lest the air hold him not !*
*Beats up the scaffold of space*
*Sick of the world's rot*
*And of God, His face.*

# GOBINEAU AND FRANCE

by

Dr. Oscar Levy

The other day in a Parisian bookshop I came across a review which featured an "inédit" from Gobineau's pen: namely, the dispatches once sent by him, then temporary chief of the French legation in Hanover, to his ministry at home. That some scholar had thought it worth while to go through the archives of the Quai d'Orsay and copy out what Gobineau had to report about his German surroundings to the authorities in Paris is indeed a true sign that this extraordinary writer has arrived, as they say in France, that he is coming into his own even in his native country. A somewhat belated recognition, it should be added, for Gobineau died at Turin Station in 1882 and lies buried in the cemetery of the town which curiously enough was once the abode of another great man, who had a great esteem for the French nobleman: Friedrich Nietzsche. Even now no special monument has been consecrated to his memory, nor is his grave, which the writer of these lines visited a few years ago, easily found. Even the name of Count Gobineau was unknown to the authorities of the Turin cemetery; it had to be spelled out and given with the date and year of his death, and only by consulting their big books were they able to trace it. When after much difficulty the grave was finally found it turned out to be a common vault, into which the

author of *L'Inégalité des Races Humaines* had been shuffled together with many other and less illustrious corpses of his time.

The question then arises: Why this oversight on the part of his contemporaries, and not only of his contemporaries? Why this grave in a foreign country which reminds us of those of Shelley, Byron, Keats and Heine? And why is France doing such belated justice to one of her most illustrious sons ?

There is a short answer to these questions. Gobineau was not of, but against his age and in advance of it. His comparative neglect and belated discovery is thus due to two causes, one European and the other national. It was France, above all, that was hurt by the new teaching and the outspoken criticism of one who belonged to her own people. The sensitiveness of French opinion was accentuated by a misunderstanding which arose after Gobineau's death over his message and which partially excuses the coldness of his compatriots. But let us first examine the European or super-national aspects of this strange neglect.

There is a famous sentence of Gobineau himself: "Moi, je n'ai qu'une seule idée." This assertion will astonish all those who know something of the rich work and the many talents of its author, but it is a true statement nevertheless. Gobineau had only one principal idea in his head, that of race, which in his opinion had influenced the whole of history. And with this idea he contradicted everything that Europe had believed and cherished for two thousand years. But this idea of race, which means aristocracy, whose absence "ruins a civilization more safely than luxury, atheism or immorality" — this idea was a particularly horrible heresy in the nineteenth century, the century which tried to realize on earth the Kingdom of God before Whom all men are equal; and if they

are equal before God, they might likewise be equal before each other and without God. Thus ran the democratic thought of the past century, Christian thought at bottom, but with the Divinity left out. If men, as is only too evident, are not equal, it must be the fault of environment, hygiene, society, legislation, education or lack of opportunities. For Gobineau, all these excuses for the inequality among men did not exist. What did exist for him was the conviction that there are men who are capable of noble thought and deed and those who are incapable of elevated opinion and generous action. Looking back into history he discovered only one stock from which sprang these higher beings and nobler minds; there was only one race to which humanity was indebted for all that has made life strong and beautiful: the Aryan race. But this race is getting scarce nowadays: the Aryans are being swamped by the blacks and the yellows, and what is worse by minor people of their own stock. There remain only a very few "Sons of Kings" as Gobineau calls them in his famous novel, *Les Pléiades;* perhaps only three thousand all the world over; beings who are more and more isolated, who live in despair and solitude, for they know the fate that awaits them: their forced presence at the destruction of an ancient civilization. Gobineau, it will be seen, long before the world war, was a confirmed unbeliever in "progress" and "evolution" — that divine Providence into which the pre-war age put its chief faith. He was, in consequence, even in his own time, nicknamed "the prince of pessimists" and justly so, for his writings abound in dark forebodings for the age. And what age ever liked to be told about its imminent disruption? Small wonder that the Europe of Gobineau did not choose to listen to its gloomy critic: it preferred to lend its ear to the prophets of love and sunshine who, by the

way, then, as in ancient Israel, turned out to be the false prophets. Just as Jeremiah was not popular, so Gobineau never received his "encore"; nor could he have had it in his own day. Only when the clouds have gathered and thunder and lightning are upon us does his sun rise; for he alone in a world of confident believers announced the coming doom.

Gobineau, the aristocrat, had announced the doom of democracy, and democracy did not listen until it had broken down. But it is listening now, if not yet to Gobineau's message, then at least to his pessimistic and powerful vaticinations. This is one of the reasons for Gobineau's posthumous fame in Europe.

## II

And yet France has treated Gobineau much worse than Europe. True, the France of the French Revolution had good reason to complain, for she was especially unsympathetic to Gobineau, who never spared pouring his contemptuous comment upon the lady with the Phrygian cap, Marianne. The lady, as ladies sometimes do, resented this treatment; or, what is also ladylike, did not choose to listen. Gobineau did not complain about that: he could not have expected anything else. What he did not expect and could not have expected, and what he rightly and until the end of his life resented, was something quite different.

There were some intelligent people in France who did listen to him, who recognized his gifts, but who shamelessly copied and plagiarized him without ever acknowledging the real source of their wisdom. In the preface to the second edition of his *Essai* Gobineau gives vent to his disappointment in the following lines: "Certain authors in France, some of whom even

enjoy great reputations, have, without reference, used my principal ideas in their work and have even gone so far as to copy whole chapters of it, without ever lifting my 'incognito'." This charge was aimed at Taine and Renan, the latter being the foremost thief and culprit in Gobineau's eyes. In a letter dated the fourth of March, 1859, from his Château de Tyre, Gobineau writes: "Monsieur Renan, in his book *The Origin of Language* has copied whole chapters out of my race book and has been at great pains to hide my name from the world. This goes so far that even when quoting the book which Professor Pott of Halle had devoted to mine — a book in which my name appears on the title page — he forges this title, in order to keep my name out of sight."

In two letters written in 1854 and 1856, the complete texts of which have been preserved, Renan had expressed his profound admiration for Gobineau. He had promised in these letters to review the *Essai* in full for the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* but he never kept his promise. He freely used Gobineau's ideas for his own work; he avoided mentioning their author and maintained toward him the most hermetic and systematic silence. In France itself the silence of Taine and Renan has met with severe criticism. Count Leusse, for instance, under the date of May sixth, 1896, writes to Ludwig Schemann, Gobineau's German translator and biographer, the following lines: "There can be no doubt that Taine and Renan had read Gobineau and that they profited from his genius; yet they did not possess the scientific honesty ('l'honneur scientifique') to avow openly who blazed the way for them..."

The injustice of French littérateurs against Gobineau stretches far into the present century. The late Emile Faguet, author of many influential books and a member of the French Academy, penned in

1906 the following contemptuous lines about his extraordinary countryman:

"Ce Gobineau avait un peu d'esprit, un peu de style et un peu d'érudition! Il avait de l'imagination dans les idées, comme dit Voltaire; mais il n'y avait que cela. J'ai tenu pourtant à en dire, en peu de mots, mon sentiment, au moment où, après avoir longtemps langui dans l'oubli et après en être, grâce à Nietzsche, un instant sorti, il s'y replonge"...

## III

If famous Frenchmen have thus been very unfair to Gobineau, justice and impartiality forces us to acknowledge that there was a certain reason for France, herself, to underrate the wonderful thought of her now famous son. It is certainly not a very good reason; and it is a reason difficult for non-Europeans to understand: but it is, nevertheless, an excuse for her sin of neglect and indifference.

Before the war Gobineau had been exploited for nationalistic purposes by the Germans, and this has made him and his message very suspect and very unpopular in France. France, standing in just fear of Germany, did not trouble to go to the root of Gobineau's philosophy, which was addressed *to no special country:* it was enough for her to see Gobineau's standard raised on the banks of the Spree and the Elbe in order to lower it on those of the Seine and Garonne.

The story of the German misinterpretation, amazing at it is, can easily be told. Gobineau, in his book on the Inequality of Human Races, had glorified the Germanic tribes of the Middle Ages: Franks, Langobards, Merovingians etc. He had seen noble qualities, qualities different from

those of the merchant and the labourer, in these conquering and imperial races of the past. The German professors, however, followed by the "Alldeutsche" (Pangermanic) Dionysians, had transferred Gobineau's praise of the Germanic tribes of the Middle Ages to themselves, to the modern German peoples and their present and future achievement in art, philosophy and literature. Now Gobineau never meant to say this; he had, some personal German friends excepted, the same bad opinion about the Germans of Bismarck's Empire as about the French of the third Republic. He had prophesied evil to both: yet, the Germans did not wish to listen; they pretended not to notice the difference between "Germanic" and "Deutsche"; they proclaimed themselves to be the "Edelrasse" which Gobineau had discovered in their ancestors, who now were almost extinct in Europe. They never saw what Gobineau saw and felt: that modern Germany was a mixture of all possible peoples, a mélange of all possible classes, a chaos of all possible values — that "race" and "Edelrasse" were an ideal for the future, but not yet a present reality. And as little a German reality as any other. Ludwig Schemann, who has done much for Gobineau, but who combines the thoroughness of the German professor with all his "Verbohrtheit", is compelled to acknowledge that "the Germans of his time were not very favorably judged by Gobineau; but he adds "let us hope, not very justly either." (*) And very significantly he continues: "Gobineau's final prophecy of world calamity (at the end of the *Essai*) need *not* apply to the Germans... The abstract truth need not

(*) L. Schemann, *Gobineau's Rassenwerk; Stuttgart*, 1910, p. 249.

lead astray from his concrete actions a man who feels himself both a German and a hero" ("Die abstrakte Wahrheit braucht einen germanisch-heroisch empfindenden Menschen in seinem Tun nicht zu beirren"). Well, no prophecy was ever more promptly contradicted by events: the concrete action of the German heroes led them to the abstract truth of the French Count in 1918.

Thus we cannot wonder that the French looked askance at their Gobineau: a Frenchman boomed by German patriots could not be to their taste. And still worse than the German professor Schemann (who has some intellectual honesty left) there was a disciple of Gobineau, a popularizer of his teachings who had a most extraordinary success in Germany and, before the war, even in England; a man, however, who like Taine and Renan never acknowledged his spiritual ancestor — he even denied his influence upon himself. This man was Houston Stewart Chamberlain. His thought moulded more than that of any other man the mind of William II, who had his books distributed to all the schools and who never ceased recommending him in private conversation to the statesmen of his time. It would transgress the space at my disposal if I were to comment in detail on the message of this Englishman and naturalized German. It is perhaps unecessary, for this task I performed, before the war, in my introduction to Gobineau's *Renaissance* (*) where all the dire consequences of Chamberlain's popularity in Germany were rightly foretold.

All this, we may be permitted to hope, is now ancient history, for Gobineau is beginning to be

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(*) Published 1913, republished 1927, Allen and Unwin, London, Putman, New York.

appreciated on both sidea of the Rhine and elsewhere *for his own merits* and not exploited for the sake of blind national passion. It will then be seen that he belongs to the few authors of the nineteenth century who have survived the collapse of the bourgeoisie and democracy in Europe and who, like Nietzsche, have pointed the way to a higher and finer, if entirely different, ideal.

# THE LETTER

by

Jerome Blum

"While crossing the intersection of Diversey Boulevard and Lincoln Highway, at three yesterday afternoon, Alice was knocked down by a 'Yellow' and killed. Affectionately, your brother, Tom."

Hugh Stewart sat in his room reading and rereading this short, typewritten document which had arrived with the morning's mail. He turned the page to look at the other side. It was blank. He turned it back and scanned the familiar, printed letterhead of his brother's business address — the neatly blocked type with the name and cable address, the words, "Atlas Cement, Stewart Building," then the names of the officers of the company in the left hand corner, beginning, "Thomas C. Stewart, President." He ran his fingers over the embossed words in the center, and looked at the typewritten body of the letter again, until he came to his brother's signature: "Affectionately, your brother, Tom." The printed words of the letter were having a strange effect upon him, the body of the paper, itself, so clean, crisp and white, the print distinct, clear. No mistake anywhere. There was no misunderstanding its content. The words went marching, quietly and orderly, in exact sequence to his brain. Alice, his brother's wife, killed. That was what it said. He read it all over again, from the "Dear Hugh",

through to the end, then turned slowly around and tossed the letter back of him, and let it fall across the orchestral score on which he had been working.

He got up and slowly paced the floor, then he walked to the window and looked out upon the gravelled roofs below, following the line of roofs leading to the river. He stood with his face against the pane, touching his forehead to the cool glass. Turning away from the window he lit a cigarette, went to the bath, put the cigarette upon a ledge and turned on the faucet in the huge bowl, watching it fill. He bent his head low and cupping his hands again and again brought palms full of cold water about his face. Then he lowered his head full into the bowl, submerged it until he felt a cold line of water touch the nape of his neck. When he had refreshed and dried himself thoroughly with a rough towel, he dressed and brushed his hair, relit his cigarette, threw his coat over his arm, took his hat, and walked out of the room to the elevator. He pressed the button.

He stood there a moment with closed eyes and holding his forehead, then returned to his room, took the letter, and slipping it into his outside pocket, locked the door and went back to the elevator.

Whitey, the negro operator, had just opened the door with a cheery, "Good mornin', Mr. Stewart; bright day, sir," meanwhile eying the indicator attached to the side of the car which showed three white squares for the eighth, seventh and sixth floors. Whitey smartly tapped the steel plunger underneath, turning the white squares to black again. Clanging shut the door of the elevator, he dropped to the next floor. "Lovely mornin', Miss. Yes'm, they shoh does have stamps on the main floh, Miss. They always has'm."

Bzzzz, the buzzer sounded, showing two floors

white on the indicator. "Mawnin', Guvnor. Heahs yah paper, Sir." The lift stopped at each of the next three floors taking on passengers, and now filled, passed the last four without stopping. Blank faces on landings followed its swift downward course. "Full house," explained Whitey, as it eased toward the ground floor.

The passengers had stood quietly, politely, the men with hats courteously to one side or held a few inches above their heads in fixed attitudes, with elbows brushing the cheeks of tidy, prim looking women and demure, downward looking girls. They stood in one position. No one had spoken a word except Whitey, with his cheery word of morning greeting.

Hugh Stewart stood pressed against the back of the car where he had gradually been forced by the additional passengers from successive floors. He was alternately looking at the necks of two women directly in front of him, at the same time feeling the semi-heat from their placid bodies not yet stirred by the movement of the day. The red neck of an English parson and his stiff, white, shiny collar attracted him. He could see his jaw slip and wobble within the grimly closed mouth. He contrasted the coloration of the ham pink and apple red markings of the minister's neck with the pale, egg-tinted texture of the woman's skin directly in front of him. He noticed the two cords of her neck that went up and under her taffy-colored hair, and were lost beneath the outlines of a blue, helmet-like straw hat. A tan indented pock on her neck, immediately above the delicate band of her waist somehow made him think of a yellow speck in the white of an egg.

The car touched the street floor and the passengers hurried out above the tiled surface of the lobby, their heads erect and faces slightly tilted upward as

if recollecting something or expecting to be called.

Hugh Stewart walked quickly to the front door. He crossed the street diagonally to Washington Square opposite, and seated himself on a bench facing a huge circle of cement. He spread his legs, leaned back and laughed out loud.

He laughed again and again so that people looked his way.

"God, it's great. That's great—that's a great joke," he said quite distinctly, and again to himself, "God, that's a great joke." The truth was that he was quite confused. There were certain misgivings, but it seemed to him that it was a great joke anyway. He felt that his brother Tom's letter was one on him. Here he had been thinking his own troubles were the only ones in the world, crabbing, worrying, fretting. Only the other day he had written his brother he couldn't stand it any longer; he was breaking under the strain and if his brother loved him he would at once come to New York. Hugh just had to see him. There was so much on his mind. He could no longer think straight. He couldn't handle it all. He couldn't handle anything any more. He was God damn sick. If the truth were known, his capacity for work was gone. He was at loose ends and if his brother loved him at all he would come to New York to see what could be done.

Three months before his own wife had left him and gone home. The thing was worse than a mess. It ended in a riot within himself that gave him no peace. Like a continual, crazy movie going on inside his brain with an occasional intermission for sleep. He recalled with a knife-like pain the night when she was due back on the 8:30 train, from a visit to Ruth Salisbury. He had met every train that pulled into the little station of the artist colony where they lived. He had waited in the station or in the Ford for each

train until two in the morning, watching each set of tail-lights down the track until they became tiny red specks in the night. She'd surely be on the eleven o'clock train. It passed. She must have gone to a show, he thought. She would be on the next, the one that came in at midnight. It, too, passed... She's having a supper party. She probably won't come until the two o'clock train. The next one passed... And at five minutes to two he stood in the middle of the track straining his eyes and ears for the approach of the train. It's good it's dark, he reflected. He could see the light way off and be relieved. Yes, that was something — something out there in the gloom is coming. Yes, that's her, that's it...

The chill of the raw night softened. He could hear the whistle, sharp and shrill, in the fog. He would just take her luggage and be glad she had come...

He stepped back on the platform and waited...

The train pulled in. The conductor, with hand on the side rail and one foot on the lower step, peered out at the closed station. What did he mean by looking that way at Hugh standing there ? Then he swung his dimly lit lantern forward and stepped back in the car.

Hugh watched the two coaches start with a jerk. It's stopping, he thought, stepping forward a pace, but the train lumbered out and he watched the red tail-light disappear down the track...

He buttoned his coat, started the car, returned home and drove into the barn. He felt his way back in the dark to the front door. Repeating to himself, "Keep quiet now. Just keep quiet," he lit the kerosene lamp in the front room. In the obscure light of the flame he saw five huge dishes on the table, heaped with food, one light plate, one dark and others of various hues. Bringing the light close

he saw one was heaped with rice, another with prunes, another with oatmeal, one with mush and a large plate of hash. Standing by the table he ate the hash with his fingers, absently, mechanically, licking his fingers clean. In his room he washed his hands and face, then turned the lamp low so it would last all night, and went to bed.

For three days he waited, watching the postman, waiting for word from his wife. None came. He ate more of the hash, the mush and the rice... On the third day a neighbor, Mrs. Blaikie, came and told how his wife came to her the first night by auto. There were some things she wanted — toilet articles, clothes, letters and papers, a diamond ring, a tin crucifix that she had found in Germany (that was for luck), and two strings of beads. She started to go to the house but lost her nerve. She was afraid the neighbor said, that Hugh might see her. For three days she stayed in the house of the woman. At last she borrowed a nightgown and toothbrush and went off only this morning...

"It's a shame, Hugh, that's what it is. So I thought I would come over and tell you, so you would know she's gone for good. I just thought I would come over and tell you. It's a wicked world, that's what it is... "

The next day another neighbor called, the wife of Broad, the teamster. A nice body she was, too, kindly and sweet, and wondered if Hugh wouldn't like to have a plate of soup. Hugh went with her; and in her kitchen he had a good plate of potato soup. When he had finished she asked him if he wouldn't like to see the house. She opened the parlor door and pulled up all the shades. The room was cool and smelled of the coverings of the chairs and the stuffing in the sofa. An odor of banana oil wafted from the radiator which she had just painted to make it look

"all nice and silvery." She had also touched up one of the frames on the wall which contained a life-size crayon picture of a somber looking man with a large mustache, staring out with no particular expression. On either side of this large portrait were two other heads, drawn to include the bust, framed in yellow quarter oak frames. From the pocket of one could be seen a neatly folded handkerchief, brought to a delicate point, which was drawn in a most life-like manner. In the lapel of the other man's coat a small mason's button was depicted, with the insignia minutely worked out. On the wall opposite hung two other crayon drawings, not so good as the first three. They had white enamel frames, the gloss of which was disturbing, reflecting, as it did, the light strawberry paper of the room. She informed Hugh quietly that these were all good men and her former husbands. She, too, had a deal of worry, but God had blessed her again with a nice, quiet man, and now they lived in peace. "And that's the only thing that matters in this life, to live in peace, and things do change for the better, Mr. Stewart, they do change."

On the way out against a small stand reclined a rather colorless photograph of her present husband, neatly framed in black walnut beading. Mrs. Broad showed it with that patient, kindly way that country people have. As they stood at the front door she said, "Whenever you don't feel like bothering about the food, sir, come and have a plate of soup with me. It's always a-cookin' here."

The next morning Hugh woke up early and noticed that mold had gathered about the prunes. He moved about mechanically and locked the windows and doors, and painted a big sign with the words, "Danger — Keep out — Danger". This he hung over the back door and looked about to see that

things were closed. As he walked out of the house he glanced briefly at the grass, young, wind-stirred and fresh. He arrived at the station just in time to catch the New York train.

All sorts of things had happened since. He had taken to walking the streets at night and sleeping in the daytime. He wandered all over New York, east and west, north and south. His body became healthy and strong. Generally he ended up in a "quick and dirty" on Eighth Street and Sixth Avenue at four or five o'clock in the morning, where he would gulp down pints of fresh milk and eat cool melon and mixed fruits. He watched the girls and toughs come in from the night's outing. Sometimes during the day he would sit in Washington Square and talk to strangers. The stories and adventures, tales and happenings he heard thus were like a welcome and refreshing stream of new life to him. But something had to be done. He couldn't go on walking around this way for the rest of his life. His wife had left... He had lived in a kind of trance for months. Every once in a while he would remember that his wife was out west — out west in a certain town... Chicago... He must set to work, he told himself, and find out what it was she wanted. Once, when they had quarrelled, she had dropped a remark about separate maintenance. He never quite knew what the expression meant until he met a friend who casually enlightened him.

Hugh called her by long distance and asked her if she wanted separate maintenance. No, she didn't want it, she replied a firm tone. Divorce? No; she didn't want divorce, either. "What do you want?" She never wanted to see him again, that's what she wanted, and hung up. The operator informed him that the call amounted to twenty-two dollars and fifty cents.

He left the telephone booth more than ever confused and proceeded to write a letter to his only brother, Tom, in Chicago. He needed his advice badly. And now the short letter in his coat pocket was the answer. He took it out and read it again. "While crossing the intersection... was knocked down by a Yellow and killed. Affectionately, your brother..." Well, this was a joke, surely. He meant something different; he meant: 'Supposing such a thing had happened, where would your troubles be? And I have two young kids. Say, you ought to be glad your wife went away'... He could hear his brother saying something like this. Yet the shock of this letter, the suddenness of it, followed by the "Affectionately, your brother" absorbed him. He sat there alone on the bench, oblivious to everything except his disorderly thoughts.

Suddenly he got up and snapped his fingers. "It's a good joke, all right. It's great. This is great. To hell with trouble!" and he laughed again and again. "What in hell does anything matter? Not a damned thing matters. You walk across the street and a machine comes along and bumps you off — just like that — killed instantly."

He had been sober for a long while, in fact he wasn't drinking, but he was getting thirsty. He wanted a pick-me-up, something stronger than milk. He remembered that his friend, Bill Napier, had some powerful whiskey, and moreover he wanted to show him the letter to see what Bill would think of it. Joke or not, he wanted to see what Bill would think; so he immediately crossed over to the hotel, to the telephone booth and got a connection. "Sure, come on over, have a drink and bring the letter."

"Taxi! 116 West 18th. A buck for good time." Hugh walked in, the letter in his hand. "Read this, Bill — what do you make of it?" Bill read it and

said, "Well, I'll be damned." He looked Hugh straight in the eye. "Never read anything like it. Let's have a drink first."

They drank two good stiff drinks, one after the other. "That's good stuff. Where do you get it?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I have a friend, Captain Finney. I can get you a case if you want it, delivered for sixty bucks. Finney will bring it to you wherever you say. Canvas backed — it will look like a young trunk. He calls it The Evidence in the Case when he's a little lit."

"Have him shoot up a case this afternoon. We'll go on a little tout. Now, what do you think of that letter? Is he kidding or not?"

"Damn if I know. It's the limit. Sounds kind of hard-boiled. He must be a queer guy. These business men are right to the point. They're used to making things short and snappy. Well, I'll be damned. Can't get over it. It sure is a hot one all right..."

"While crossing the intersection of Diversey Boulevard and Lincoln Highway, at three yesterday afternoon, Alice was knocked down by a 'Yellow' and killed. Affectionately, your brother, Tom."

# *SONNET*

by

Walter Lowenfels

*The act of you in my mind is sculptural.*
*Coiling through the mould of my brain*
*the thought of you cools into white marble*
*a monument of you as you have lain*
*before me in the dark : I know the feel*
*of you your fibres of white stone distill :*
*Through my fingers pours the carnal skein*
*of you : O love, I touch you. Not these hands :*

*The phantom fingers of my being prove*
*the mastery of structure in each vein,*
*and chisel into light your body's true*
*plasticity. In spaces where light bends*
*through silent ethers of pure sense, O love,*
*I reach, incalculably carved, You.*

Beach at Saint-Tropez, *by Lee Hersch.*

# BAUDELAIRE'S KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

by

W. T. Bandy

In the course of a recent browse among the bookstalls along the quays of the Seine, where the experienced searcher still manages to find an occasional volume of interest, we became the possessor of a copy of the *Magasin des familles* for October, 1852, containing a translation of Poe's *Philosophy of Furniture* by Charles Baudelaire. To explain our pleasure in making this particular addition to our library, it is perhaps necessary to recall a bit of literary history.

Baudelaire is sometimes erroneously referred to as the writer who introduced Poe in France. As a matter of fact he had never heard of his work until he chanced to read the translations of several stories that appeared in periodicals of 1846 and 1847. The effect they produced on him was extraordinary. He recognized in them not only ideas that he had intended to make into stories, but complete sentences that Poe had "plagiarized" by telepathy. At least, that was Baudelaire's account and if it seems strange to us, no less so was the spell thrown over him by this man with whom he never had any personal relations but whose name today is inseparable from his own. Through members of the American colony in Paris who subscribed to the *Southern Literary Messenger* and other magazines to which Poe contributed his tales, Baudelaire obtained virtually all of

his works, and resolved to translate them if it took the rest of his life — and indeed this labor of love did occupy him at intervals until his death.

His first attempt, *la Révélation magnétique*, appeared at the stormiest moment of the Revolution of 1848, when subjects more exciting than mesmerism were occupying the thoughts of the French people. Baudelaire himself, swept along on the wave of humanitarianism, gave up literature for politics and revolutionary journalism. Until 1852, when his conversion to the principles of Joseph de Maistre left him disabused forever as to the saving power of revolution and democracy (*), Baudelaire published no further translations, but in March of that year there appeared in the *Revue de Paris* the first part of his remarkable biographical and critical essay on Poe. This was the opening gun of his campaign; at its conclusion, twelve years later, when paralysis and financial harassment had left Baudelaire little more than a living corpse, Poe was the only American writer whose works were really popular in France. The excellence of his translations has been rarely contested; even those critics who are most uncompromisingly hostile to his verse, do not hesitate to praise the *Histoires extraordinaires*. It is not rare to find critics who consider them far superior to the originals and one even went so far, in a necrological article on Baudelaire, as to announce that an English man of letters was engaged in re-translating them for his countrymen, who found Poe's style vulgar and formless!

*The Philosophy of Furniture* was the third of Poe's works chosen by Baudelaire for translation.

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(*) "Joseph de Maistre and Edgar Poe taught me to reason", wrote Baudelaire, in his *Intimate Journals*. It is certain that Poe also was responsible for this conversion.

Whatever interest it may possess in our eyes, it certainly had a special one in Baudelaire's, who made frequent quotations from it and reprinted it oftener than any of his other translations. This is proved by the fact that he had Poulet-Malassis, the future publisher of the *Fleurs du mal,* make a special printing of it on large paper, later destroying all the copies but two — the reason given being that his name was misspelled on the title-page! Baudelaire disliked having his name spelled with three *e*'s as much as he disliked to see Poe's with an acute accent or diaeresis. But that seems a strange reason for destroying an entire edition. It is quite as strange to find that he did not include *la Philosophie de l'ameublement* in either of the first two collections of translations that were published by Michel Lévy in 1856 and 1857, but reserved it instead for the *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* of 1865, although it had first appeared in the *Magasin des familles* of October, 1852.

All of Baudelaire's bibliographers have overlooked the first versions of this article, beyond giving the dates, apparently on the assumption that it contained only insignificant variants. That this is not the case, anyone who took the pains to consult the first three printings (in the *Magasin des familles,* the *Monde littéraire,* and the *Pays*) could verify, for they are so totally unlike the definitive one, although similar to one another, that it is difficult to believe that they were all translated by the same person.

Of still greater interest is the following notice by Baudelaire, which appeared in the *Magasin des familles* and which has never been reprinted in any edition of Baudelaire's complete works:

"Who is there among us who in his hours of idleness has not had the delightful pleasure of constructing a model apartment, an ideal domicile, a

place to dream in ? And each one of us follows his own temperament in mingling silk with gold, wood with metal, in softening the light of the sun or increasing the artificial brilliance of lamps, in inventing new forms for funiture or clinging to old ones.

"The article that we are here offering our readers is by a great American writer, unknown in France and a little misunderstood in the United States. Edgar Poe led a miserable life and his death was if possible sadder than his life. Many of his compatriots speak of him with a certain bitterness, for the young American colossus has a sensitive skin, and even in less important things, he cannot tolerate pleasantries. Fenimore Cooper felt this keenly (*). In such cruel axioms as the following : The Yankees alone are preposterous; we have been brought to merge in simple show our notions of taste itself; the cost of an article of furniture has at length come to be, with us, nearly the sole test of its merit; the corruption of taste is a portion or a pendant of the dollar-manufacture; and his violent mockery of the passion for mirrors, for cut glass and gas in aristocratic American homes is certainly a hard dose for the susceptible gullet of a young and parvenu nation.

"Impartial or not, this article appears to us a delightful discovery, and our readers will find it interesting. As for Edgar Poe's personal ideas in the matter of furnishing, which we believe to be sound enough, they may regard them as they please.

"C. B."

The following sentence was added to this notice, when it appeared in the *Monde littéraire* for March 27, 1853:

(*) Baudelaire's allusion to Fenimore Cooper is doubtless inspired by Poe's severe review of *Wyandotte: or the Hutted Knoll.* (V. *The Literati.*)

"However we cannot conceal a smile in observing that our author, dominated by his almost oriental imagination, errs somewhat when he reproaches his fellow citizens, and the apartment which he offers us as a model of simplicity, may appear to many people as a model of sumptuousness."

Without resorting to the tedious expedient of citing long passages from the two texts, we can give an approximate idea of the sort of errors contained in the first version: *Allemands* appears for Dutch, *marbres et peintures* for marbles and colours, *dans une foule de cas* for under any circumstances, *lumière* (with no modifier) for glare, *glaces* for glass (in the sense of *verre*), *appartements* for appurtenances, *aussi* for nevertheless, etc. The translator often betrays his ignorance of English by refusing to translate certain phrases: *of no meaning*, *easily recognised*, *in the abstract*, *of any kind*, even though they may be necessary to complete the meaning of a sentence. The puns that abound in Poe's works were sure traps for this inexperienced translator, who handled them with all the gravity he accorded the more serious passages. "The Scotch are *poor* decorists" appears with the word *poor* italicised in the original text, but Baudelaire translates merely "Les Ecossais sont de pauvres décorateurs"; likewise, "In Spain they are *all* curtains, a nation of hangmen" becomes "*Quant aux Espagnols, ils sont tout rideaux, une nation de bourreaux*".

These are flaws that might mar an excellent translation, but their importance is not great enough to impair the reader's comprehension and appreciation of the article as a whole. Unfortunately, there are more serious ones, indicating complete misinterpretation of the original on the part of Baudelaire so that the author's meaning is lost in an absurdity or entirely

reversed. When Poe wrote, "With formal furniture, curtains are out of place", he certainly did not mean, "*Mesquins et étriqués les rideaux sont superflus*", nor, in speaking of certain "glass chandeliers... gas-lighted and without shade", did he have reference to "*candélabres de cristal..., vomissant une lumière de gaz, sans ombre possible.*" The point of the whole article, which is directed against the American idea that the cost of a piece of furniture is the only criterion of its beauty, is weakened by Baudelaire's translation of "Americans of moderate means" as "*Américains d'un goût perfectionné*". In his description of a room furnished with good taste, Poe has the curtains made of "*thick* silver tissue", but the translator prefers them of a "*très léger tissu*". Poe's picture-frames are richly carved "without being dulled", which Baudelaire takes to mean "*richement sculptés, sans lourdeur*". Here it is clear that he took the dictionary's definition of "dull" in the figurative sense, "*lourd*", without being aware that the literal one should have been "*mat*". And finally, to complete the transformation of Poe's ideal room into one that its designer would scarcely have recognised, Baudelaire replaces the "sweet and vivid flowers" in the exquisite Sèvres vases with mere "*fleurs naturelles*"!

We will conclude our fault-finding with only one more error, but it shows clearly that Baudelaire was completely ignorant of conversational English and that he tried to replace knowledge by a conscientious use of lexicons. The weakness of this method is well illustrated by the following example of the results it produces. In speaking of his ideal room, Poe states that "it has only one door — by no means a wide one". We leave it to the reader to decide how Baudelaire got "*elle n'a qu'une porte — une porte qu'on ne laisse pas ouverte.*"

So much for the shortcomings of the first versions. The final one — that of the *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses*, — shows how much progress Baudelaire had made in twelve years. It is the faithful image of Poe's article, even in its defects. Once on his guard for puns, however, Baudelaire is inclined to carry his vigilance too far, translating the sentence "The Dutch have, perhaps, an indeterminate idea that a curtain is not a cabbage" by "*Les Hollandais ont peut-être l'idée vague qu'on ne fait pas un rideau avec de la gratte*". He explains in a foot-note that "cabbage" may mean either a vegetable popular in Holland or the scraps of material retained by a tailor. The dictionary is still near at hand.

Did Baudelaire learn English from his mother, as some biographers have stated? Madame Aupick was born in London, of French refugees from the Revolution, but she returned to France when still quite young. Several of her letters to Asselineau, Baudelaire's biographer and friend, contain expressions in English, but they are of the kind that indicates more a desire to show off a little knowledge, than an actual ability to use the language. She signs one of her letters: "Quite yours, my dear." We cannot believe that Baudelaire learned more than the elements of English from her and the fact that he had forgotten the little she taught him is revealed in a letter that he wrote her in 1852, upon beginning his translations of Poe: "J'avais beaucoup oublié l'anglais, ce qui rendait la besogne encore plus difficile. Mais maintenant je le sais *très bien*. Enfin, je crois que j'ai mené la chose à *bon port*." The italics are Baudelaire's and they indicate a confidence in his ability as translator that is not justified by the early version of *The Philosophy of Furniture* which is, perhaps, the worst piece of work he ever published. With the

same passion for perfection that is shown by the many corrections he made in the successive printings of his poems, Baudelaire continued his work of translation and, in order to improve his knowledge of their language, passed his afternoons in conversation with the grooms at the English taverns of the Rue de Rivoli.

The real reason Baudelaire destroyed the brochure of the *Philosophie d'ameublement* printed by Poulet-Malassis in 1853 was not that his name was misspelled, but rather that he saw clearly, with his rare power of self-criticism, that the translation was unworthy of himself — and of Poe, whom he regarded as his master.

Bal Négre, *by E. E. Cummings.*

# *SONNET*

by

R. C. Dunning

*My well beloved lady and one queen,*
*Let not the world treat hardly of your name.*
*What know they beyond cavil? And if blame*
*Talk loudly of your life, then let the keen*
*Quick driven dagger fall to make you clean*
*By blood of him that wronged you: life were tame*
*If you were not — inform my heart, O flame,*
*O fiery hope with weary hell between.*

*Men call you beauty and your handmaid art,*
*Yet know not what they fight for: you are one*
*To be a harlot or to be a nun —*
*A war-god or ideal of a heart*
*That cannot name you: yet I do not care,*
*It cannot matter if you are but fair.*

# THE BRIDGE OF CASUISTRY

by

Pierre Loving

The divine laws of nature, according to certain astrological American critics have recently been suspended, and a miracle has come to pass in the firmament of the reading public. A book, planetary in its event, possessing great literary distinction, "of unmistakable originality of style, of form and of point of view", compact of beauty, sentiment and high thought, has become fixed in innumerable hearts, has swept lesser systems of taste from the sky, purified the earth and netted both the young author and his publisher, if report be true, enormous sums of money. The book is *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Mr. Thornton Wilder, author of *The Cabala*, which in the opinion of the same admirers is a yet more superb, if not so epoch-making, work.

Now since it is foreign to our thought to admit "suspension", natural things being what they are, it is, we feel, somewhat incumbent on us to try to explain this extraordinary phenomenon as best we can. In going about this business, it is perhaps necessary at the outset to say that Mr. Wilder is not answerable for the critical hallelujahs he has reaped, nor yet for what we hold is the still bewildered appreciation of the general public. That this appreciation is both bewildered and unsure is borne out by the hieratic reactions in later critical

estimates, behaviourist in source, as though the author had achieved canonization after being too coarsely handled, violated and soiled by foul contact — a recurrent phenomenon in almost all religions. The following quotation from an article by Mr. Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic* for August 8, 1927, is an illustration in point:

"...the literary snobs have been driven by his tremendous popularity, by the obsequious gossips themselves, into assuming there must be something meretricious about him". Since this extremely capable advocate of Mr. Wilder's suggests the word "meretricious" — one which we ourselves would have scrupled to use — it might not here be amiss to make certain precise distinctions. In *The Cabala* and in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* there is very little, in fact, that is actually meretricious because the prototypes of Mr. Wilder's choice are nearly all first-hand, which is an excellent token of his taste. If there is a summary epithet which would appear to fit this author exactly, it is perhaps that of "a man of taste"; if his hand sometimes falters, it is because a perfect amalgam of other men's material or temper and one's own aesthetic precisions is hard to attain. But we should be doing Mr. Wilder some injustice if we did not at once make clear that he approaches his matter with the *habito* of an artist, that his sincerity is beyond question; and that we, as audience, are concerned here merely with his effects.

It is in disinterestedly judging these effects, as they are given life in his collection of short plays, *The Angel Who Troubled the Waters,* that we should be tempted, if anywhere at all, to make use of the word meretricious. A vicarious stress is all too apparent in them, and this feeling as we go on is hard to shake off. Maeterlinck, Oscar

Wilde, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, the Symbolists. These short pieces are somewhat blatant and ineffectual pastiches, and Mr. Wilder quite disarmingly admits as much in a kind of smooth Stevensonian preface, composed mimetically by a promising young man of sixteen.

This so vernal promise, it may be presumed, has come to opulent fruit in *The Cabala*, Mr. Wilder's first book to be published and which, according at least to his most fervid admirers, is far superior to the epoch-making *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. The revolution in public taste was wrought by the popular second opus, but the authentic power, ideally stored up, dwells in the first, *The Cabala* — this is at all events the manner in which Mr. Wilder's staunchest advocates reason. And here you cannot fail to recognize the illusions of a priestly cult, the cult of the dying god: his later appearance is less perfect and magical than his first; he is slowly fading; the potency to work wonders however is still in him, a little mitigated now, but remember how many thousands he managed to feed with a few loaves and fishes. His power will some day recover and rise again, for it is secretly immanent. (Does not *The Cabala* — ark, holy tree, stone, mountain, the poisoned arrow that slew him, miracle-working in itself — fully prove this?)

Lest it be thought that this is a gross exaggeration, let me beg the reader to examine the reasons generally given by critics for the failure of *The Cabala* to take hold, for the lack of success of the book with the wider public. To save the reader's time, however, I shall abridge some of these reasons for him as they issued in the public prints. The chief one usually put forward is the author's "unmistakable originality"; another is the novelty of the form; and still another

is the opaque density or the elusiveness or the depth of his thought. The style, also, it is clear, presented a ravel of difficulties to be untwisted. It is "masterful"; it is "closely packed"; it is "beautiful". But the radiant, breathless surprise is this: the young god, before he put on divinity like a cloak, had eaten and digested another, an older god (only irreligion could doubt it!). In the case of Mr. Wilder, this consumed earlier deity is — Marcel Proust. Specifically, we are told that this young author is an imitator of Proust. "Wilder," one critic declares, "has listened to Proust's very heart, and his own has been timed to its beat."

That this assertion is quite tenable, if not altogether obvious, even a cursory perusal of *The Cabala* and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* will make manifest. So well, indeed, is this tender organ of Mr. Wilder's attuned to that of the author of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* that he has not scrupled to "slip all too easily into rewriting the death of Bergotte." And he has furthermore slipped into it, or into its counterpart in some other writer, again and again, for Mr. Wilder cannot resist the impulse, which is also three-quarters of his talent, to rewrite beautiful scenes from the literary remains of other writers. As we have suggested above, Mr. Wilder is nothing if not a man of exquisite taste; he is selective, and he has the *habito* or awareness of the true artist. Even his artfully artless preface to *The Angel Who Troubled the Waters* testifies fully to this; he has not the heart to command the imperious tide to stay, and he fills his fountain-pen from many inks. Yet no one will charge him with an absence of tact and understanding.

In spite of transposed-biography, pseudo-philosophy, a furbishing up of Proust and others, the

elements, barring the last, which are largely responsible for the vulgar interest in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Mr. Wilder is vociferously acclaimed an original writer. By transposed biography is meant "costume" biography in which the heart of a character, in the process of transmutation, is missed, sacrificed, that is, to attractive non-essentials. The extent to which Mr. Wilder has glozed over the essential core of the Marquesa de Montmayor will become apparent when we have compared his portrait with the avowed original, Madame de Sévigné. It may be that the relationship of mother and daughter, the relationship of the "agonizing" mother, filled with abject and desperate love is Proustian; it is, however, not so true or moving because in Mr. Wilder's pages it is falsetto and overplayed. Beside Madame de Sévigné's concrete, restrained and yet iridescently playful maternal emotion, so happily exemplified in the following quotation, the Marquesa's letter, which Mr. Wilder has invented to grace his occasion, is botched and trivial:

"Je la reçois présentement, cette aimable lettre; ne voyez-vous comme je la reçois et avec quelle tendresse je la lis? Je crois que vous ne me demandez pas que je puisse être de sang-froid en cette occasion. Il est vrai que la dignité de *beauté* ou vous avez été été élevée n'est pas d'une petite fatigue; et si vous n'étiez point belle, vous vous reposeriez : il faut choisir... Vous savez comme j'aime votre beauté; mon amour propre m'y fait prendre intérêt: je vous la recommande pour l'amour de moi. Il me semble qu'on me vas trouver bien habile en Provence d'avoir fait un si joli visage, si doux et si régulier."

It would indeed be hard to match this last sentence anywhere as an example of the externalization of the sort of emotion to which I have referred.

Mr. Wilder is beyond question serious in his aim, and he approaches his matter with the extreme cautiousness of an old wise spirit, descending from the pure empyrean, to endow it with form or life. What is mainly relevant here, however, apart from the enthusiastic reception of his book as a public phenomenon, is the total effect of the work as an artistic product.

Bearing this in mind, we may now go on to examine *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Almost on first scrutiny we get the impression that it has somehow been built up by many hands, not Mr. Wilder's, but Briarean hands which he commands and whose work he mortises together. This in some part accounts for the changing rhythm of the author's style, which is not uniform throughout; by this I mean that it is not uniformly sustained. In Mr. Wilder's prose there emerges an identifiable quality — perhaps it is, as has been contended, a Proustian quality — especially when he is at his best as in *The Cabala*. Not that *The Cabala* strikes us as being a finer book; on the contrary, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is humaner and pervaded somewhat less by the secret vice of a mosaicized style. But in *The Cabala* the prose flows better; it is more liquid, and the liquidity and esoteric quality are admirably suited to the subjects chosen. Nevertheless, there is, as in *The Bridge*, a fair modicum of rewriting; sometimes, as in *Alix* the "rewriting" is quite good or, say, the pastiche is marvellously true; at other times Mr. Wilder fails when he should be tautly keyed up and at his Proustian apex. The following from *Alix* is one illustration of rank failure (Evaluate the dilute Maeterlinckian — not Proustian — gem):

"We come from a world where we have known incredible standards of excellence, and we dimly

remember beauties which we have not seized again; and we go back to that world."

And since we are come to the question of effects, there is one other in *The Bridge,* seriously intended, evidently seriously labored and polished (not ironically) which spatters the gallery walls. It is not "meretricious", but it counts exactly the same because it borders on the mawkish. It is Dantesque via Rossetti and other pre-Raphaelites. In Mr. Wilder it comes as a distinct shock, almost of kill-joy disillusion. Poor Brother Juniper, his Virgilian guide through the mazes of the Country of Cockaigne, Lima, Peru, is burned at the stake for casuistry, and Mr. Wilder finishes him off in this airy fashion:

"...he called twice on St. Francis and leaning upon a flame he smiled and died."

⁂

*The Bridge of San Luis Rey* when it first appeared was hailed by the supposed discriminating as a most original book, both in style and plan. We have already discussed the putative originality of the style, and we may now broach the originality of the vertebrate plan. In doing so, however briefly, we cannot avoid touching on the soundness and the meaning of that architectonic plan, in a parallel view, for without meaning or reference it is, we believe, impossible to canvass these things, and we wander in an aesthetic, an inhuman void.

By plan, then, we do not indicate plot; for both exist here; and one, namely, the plan, subsists ideally, so to speak, in the numb metaphysical mind of Brother Juniper, one of the characters. Briefly, first, let me summarize the narrative plot, and thereafter proceed to the plan itself, by which the author, on the basis

of originality of vision, if not of forceful presentation, must ultimately be assessed. Five people with widely dissimilar lives, virtues and sins, meet their death when the old osier bridge of San Luis Rey near Lima falls into the gulf below. The Franciscan Brother Juniper, who is a witness of the catastrophe, is much puzzled by the casuistical point:

"Why did this happen to *those* five? If there were any plan in the universe at all, if there were any pattern in human life, surely it would be discovered mysteriously latent in those lives so suddenly cut off. Either we live by accident, or we live by plan and die by plan. And on that instant Brother Juniper made the resolve to inquire into the secret lives of those five persons, that moment falling through the air, and to surprise the reason of their taking off."

Accordingly, the body of the book is composed of the chronicle of these lives with which a handful of others is interwoven. This is the bare plot; but the plan, I repeat, exists, at the beginning in a pure state and at the end in a material state, in Brother Juniper's mind, naturally of a theological turn. The material state, to continue the language of metaphysics, is *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* itself; that is to say, Mr. Wilder has contributed the plastic stories of five lives; and the Franciscan, his Virgilian mentor, has given them their unity or form. The lives themselves tend to interlace; or, to put it another way, Mr. Wilder's contribution would have been quite sufficient: we do not need the theologically inbred inquiry and reasoning ("to surprise the reason of their taking off") of Brother Juniper to fuse them together into a harmonious whole. Consequently, while the individual tales and studies are passable as connected short stories, the casuistical wire of Brother Juniper's logic

is stretched as tight as the traffic will bear. For surely Mr. Wilder cannot take Brother Juniper's worried inquiry seriously; and if he does not so take it, what weight or validity or point inheres in the solemn plan which exists, and can only exist, in Brother Juniper's rather befuddled mediaeval mind? Brother Juniper, it seems, has triumphed in his martyrdom by making a barren scholastic out of his ingenious creator.

Even if the Franciscan were irresistibly persuasive, as he appears to have been, Mr. Wilder could still have found a way out of the dilemma. He could have offered us the same plan under the searching light of Voltairean irony, such as we find in *Candide*, where an analogously silly theorem of Leibnitz is for ever withered to a stale absurdity. Thus Mr. Wilder's or Brother Juniper's plan would have come home to decent men's bosoms, at the least it would have won us over to its appositeness and its valid meaning, for it would in that case have had a *relevant meaning*.

It is clear from the grave and even pontifical way in which Mr. Wilder conducts himself on this level (stylistically, if you like), that the plan, growing out of the barren questioning of Brother Juniper's conventual mind, rendered more than a little bilious by an illiberal reading of the church fathers, is not meant to be construed in this ironical light. Mr. Wilder must dissect the question; its mere posing stings the interest; it promises, clearly, an interesting narrative plot or development, or at least some sort of climactic answer. The emptiness of the question escapes the general reader: he is held; he has been raped for beautiful letters. In support of this inquiry Mr. Wilder, speaking in the Franciscan's person but sotto voce, brings Shakespeare and the Bible to the zinc tables of his prose morgue:

"Some say that we shall never know that to the gods we are like flies that boys kill on a summer's day, and some say, on the contrary, that the very sparrows do not lose a feather that has not been brushed away by the finger of God."

However, as the merger of Mr. Wilder and Brother Juniper proceeds apace, broken awhile by the interregnum of the narrative plot or the stories of the five characters who lost their lives, the gravity of Mr. Wilder's manner waxes stronger and more pontifical. "The discrepancy between faith and the facts is greater than is generally assumed," he says. For all we know to the contrary, this brilliant epigram may have given occasion to the belief that Mr. Wilder has a "profound viewpoint", and that he is, as we say, a thinker. If fact is taken as appearance and faith as reality or merely the *not-ourselves* of Matthew Arnold, then this short sentence alone would constitute a procès-verbal accusing Mr. Wilder rather severely of not having carefully read his own sources, one of which is unquestionably the late Dr. Bradley, who, after a long lifetime of brooding on this subject and its implications, could not achieve the same sureness of assertion. But of course Brother Juniper could not have read *Appearance and Reality*... The Abbess is, you will recall, granted the final word and here, more himself and on safer ground, Mr. Wilder relapses as occasionally elsewhere, with all the sober art of which he is capable, into the jejune style of his plays:

"But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the dead and

the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

It may be urged that I have no right to insist that Mr. Wilder be dry or profound or playful, when, perhaps, he chooses not to be; and that Brother Juniper is a real character, created, complete, privileged and wholly self-explanatory. This objection might be sound in another context and if Brother Juniper had not lent the quirks and quiddities of his befuddled mind to the structural design of the whole book. The casuistry of the Franciscan, adopted as a usable scaffold, thus becomes inseparably merged in the "viewpoint" or the capacity for thinking betrayed by the author. Whatever "viewpoint" the author may hold, certainly it cannot be isolated, because it is never really brought out, in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Accident or Purpose? Is there a systematic plan in the world or is the world destitute of plan? Mr. Wilder has himself posed these questions and, what is more, he has thought fit — not ironically as the wise have assumed — to build a book upon them.

But to any one who has thought about these things, about "appearance and reality" — to the civilized mind, to the mind god-intoxicated also — these questions are all but footless. All modern thinking about God or purpose must start where Spinoza started when he said:

"By God, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance containing infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence."

In our time there is a mature and clear expression of this view, this genesis in speculation about God and nature, embodied in prose that should, I think,

also satisfy the cordial admirers of Mr. Wilder's style. It is from Mr. Santayana.

"The great Sphinx in posing her riddle and looking so threatening and mysterious is secretly hoping that I may laugh. She is not a riddle but a fact; the words she whispers are not oracles but prattle. Why take her residual silence, which is inevitable, for a challenge or a menace? She does not know how to speak more plainly. Her secret is as great a secret to herself as to me... Henceforth nature and spirit can play together like mother and child, each marvellously pleasant to each other, yet deeply unintelligible; for as she created him she knew not how, merely smiling in her dreams, so in waking and smiling back he sometimes understands her; at least he is all the understanding she has of herself."

# *THE QUICK STEP STEP-QUICK*

by

Genevieve Taggard

*The mind is a tight-rope walker, one end*
*Of rope knotted in air... bend*

*Instantly back, when it slacks! If the force jerks*
*The rope taut, be ready! No nerve works*

*So quick, quite, as the rope. Wind the mind's nerve*
*Tighter. The rope will slack under, and curve*

*Down from the careful foot, mincing and edging its*
*[toe,*
*You will be nobody until you feel it go,*

*To the nerve's dismay. Then, desperate, use*
*The hitch, the hold on the invisible noose!*

*Then and there,*
*If you can, tread air, tread air!*

# FOUR AMERICAN COMPOSERS

by

Marc Blitzstein

In Berlin, Arnold Schönberg said: "It is only since the war that you American composers have been cut off from your source of supply, which is Germany, and have been writing Franco-Russian music. Ten years before the war you were all writing German music; and ten years from now you will all be writing German music again."

Malipiero, in a recent issue of *Modern Music*, pleads for a return to the old Italian comedy, hoping to achieve a new classicism by wooing the growing pains of the old. Casella publicly complains of the non-national aspect of Stravinsky's recent music, and states without ambiguity that Stravinsky is on the wrong track; he, Casella, will be more and more deeply Italian in his future works.

There is little need here to go into the contemporary French school, which has produced one authentic genius, Milhaud; one highly gifted and disorganized talent, Honegger; one charming infant, Poulenc; and a raft of small singers, charlatans, *feuilletonistes*. The godparents of the school are Satie and Stravinsky; at almost any moment this alliance seems headed for the rocks.

There remains always in the background the archprototype of the "school", the National "Five" of the Russians. Out of it emerges Moussorgsky.

A school (in the musical sense) grows when the

technical habits and training of a certain locality or a certain point of view reach a level of culture high enough to produce individual composers of uncommon stamp. It is the function of a school to create, to force out, these individuals. There is a current illusion that you can start a school by collecting several composers and issuing a group manifesto, vague enough to include the idiosyncrasies of each, flamboyant enough to paralyse the mind's search for unity. This kind of school has the vitality of a baby synthetically assembled in a laboratory. Even its reason for existence is suspect; more than likely it is an economic merger, invented to resist outside competition. Your real school grows naturally, is not started; it is a fact before any of its members are aware of it. It partakes of an advantage: the mutual stimulation and feeding which go on among its adherents, and the acquisition by them of roots which for want of a better term we call "national"; and a disadvantage: the danger that they may all begin to sound alike, that an isolation unproductive of breadth be created, the danger of a clique (certain pages of Poulenc and Auric, poles apart otherwise; certain passages in Borodin and Rimsky).

American music today is in this sense schoolless; there is no central focus-point for training, our talents scatter over the globe; each with an aim, the large picture at first glance aimless. Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, George Antheil, Carlos Chávez write four kinds of music; each has worked alone, in his particular locality (New York, New England, Paris, Mexico City), each has dug out his method, his means, without benefit of an indigenous American musical culture. What results is music sturdy and fibrous, almost never polished, never facile (except when Copland leans heavily on Milhaud, or Antheil on

Stravinsky); music of four men which has the single common quality of a laborious and uneasily-nurtured process toward being.

Aaron Copland lives and works in New York. At one time he was immensely concerned with a music that would be distinctly American, and turned to jazz for his source. More recently, he has given up this preoccupation which was literary rather than musical, and writes simply music. In his music there are two main things: his rhythms, restless or mechanical, highly involved; and a lyric stream which belongs not to melody or harmony but to both. Technically he is extremely scrupulous in his material, stretching out 3- and 4-note motifs to great and expanded proportions; sometimes he is thrifty to the point of miserliness. His two most important compositions are the *Concerto* for piano and orchestra, and the *Lento Molto* for string quartet. In the *Concerto*, Copland says his final say on jazz; it is a jazz frenetic and illuminated at the same time; ecstasy is in part barbaric, in part mystic. What distinguishes Copland from other young composers today is the personal and subjective direction of his music: at a period when recent trends are tributaries to a current so objective that neo-classic will soon be upon the heels of a new neo-neo-classic, he maintains, has always maintained, an approach which is direct, undiverted. Copland describes nothing, he presents no picture; he is himself completely involved in his music, and what philosophy emerges does so without calculation or detachment. In the *Lento Molto*, perhaps his most perfect and inspired work, this identity of man and music is clearest; the mystic light burns from within, he carries the torch.

Copland does other things besides composing; he spends a vast amount of energy and time giving lec-

tures, writing articles, playing other composers' works in public. Most recently, he has become an impresario, producing (with Roger Sessions) a series of Copland-Sessions concerts in New York, which are designed to introduce new and neglected composers to the public. (Is this the first germinal indication of a school?) There is danger in all this extra-creative activity for Copland. The duty of a composer is to compose; there are always others to do this second and third rank musical drudgery.

Of Roger Sessions' works, I know only the three *Choral Preludes* for organ, and the second movement of the *Symphony*. These are enough to expose a gift rich in austerity, and a music whose beauty does not diminish with repeated hearings. I am told that Sessions' early music sounds much like Bloch, his teacher; the compositions I know bear great affinity to the later Stravinsky. Here is the contemplative musician. It is almost too easy to relate Sessions to his New England background; you find reticence, simplicity, ruggedness. A religious, almost ecclesiastical fervor gives to his music that lift without which it would be barren, colorless.

George Antheil is easily the most naturally gifted composer of the four. He is also the most defective. What Antheil has is musical character, exuberance, apparently limitless invention. What he lacks is endurance, the capacity to sustain what he has begun; a kind of moral character is missing. Passages of great inspiration and solidity are followed by fickle, inconsequential tinkerings; direction is lost, that vigilance and relentlessness so necessary and so rare, is absent. At the moment Antheil is so contained within the aesthetic of Stravinsky that judgment of his recent works must be withheld. The *Ballet Mécanique* grew out of the *Sacre,* but had a fine, steel-and-

hammer life of its own. In the new (second) *String Quartet* there are examples of great writing, in the so-called neo-classic manner. There is also a deal of resentable nonsense, mawkish banality. Admitted that Antheil at moments has his tongue in his cheek, is being funny; the joke is not too good, one laughs only the first time. Antheil is to a degree affected by the Surréalistes; the protest against the bourgeois gallic ideal, *le bon goût,* is understandable enough, and an exaltation of bad taste can have a certain transitional and prophylactic benefit. But the débris occasioned by a period in art is not destroyed by any small-dimensioned *volte face;* it is destroyed by a new creation, automatically and without intent. Antheil's *Concerto in La* for piano (mss. 1926) owes so much to the Stravinsky *Concerto* (1923-24) and the Stravinsky *Serenade* (published 1926, written 1925) that a hypnotic identification of Antheil with Stravinsky seems not inconceivable. Not only by reason of the neo-classic spirit of the *Concerto*; in its figurations as well, its recitative roulades; in the cliché ending of harmonic growing out of a previous chord; in the arpeggios; in its key, in the successions of thirds and sixths, the music partakes of the very breath of Stravinsky. The opening measures of the second movement are personal and beautiful, and give promise of a new and maturer Antheil; but immediately afterwards the energy dies, and we are back at a halting and imitative music. Antheil seems to betray himself constantly. His early music promised something special and fine; his later work is still experimental (in the sense that it is not fully achieved), and is music, moreover, which has nothing to do with the original promise.

The Mexican music of Carlos Chavez is the music of a primitive; it has Spanish influences, and a curious

American-Indian streak. What impresses you at first is the bareness, the structural outline. The *Sonatina* for piano, with its ritual flavor, its candor, and its delight in the percussive instrument, is as fresh, as original a composition as exists in modern music literature. Chavez is completely self-taught, and manifests the great advantages of this method of training. His music is childlike; it pursues its way totally unaffected by considerations of liveliness, suavity, nuance. The first movement of his *Sonata* for four horns (as yet unfinished) is characteristically his; it is music compact of vivacious and disjointed rhythms, sudden unexpected perfect chords, which are strangely consonant in a dissonant pattern, pedal repetitions, and a consuming intensity. Chavez' music sounds like the music of no other composer, living or dead. It is a little difficult to decide about his scope; whether he is great in a great sense. That he is real, that he is vital, and that he is important for America is without question.

# *THE FLYING COLUMN*

## *"MODERNIST" VERSE AS AN ISSUE*

We have read with great interest an article in Harpers for April by Mr. Max Eastman on "The Cult of Unintelligibility". It is not easy to comment freely on Mr. Eastman's article since it is, obviously, a fragment of a longer essay, possibly of a book, in which certain distinctions which the author makes, incomplete in the present article, will no doubt be cleared up. Mr. Eastman admirably states his position in the opening paragraph from which we take pleasure in quoting:

"Two tendencies are confused in the literary movement called modernist which ought to be distinguished. They are clearly distinguished for me, because I like one of them and the other I regard as an affliction. But many people see only one tendency here and are puzzled to define it. The tendency that I like might be called the cultivation of pure poetry. The tendency that I do not like I call the cult of unintelligibility."

Among the authors who aren't, according to Mr. Eastman, "telling you anything", he cites the names of Hart Crane, E. E. Cummings, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and Edith Sitwell. Moreover, against the thesis highhandedly maintained by Miss Laura Riding and Mr. Robert Graves in a recent book on "modernist" poetry (the hideous word modernist is uncritically accepted by Mr. Eastman) he sets the theory of Mr. I. A. Richards that poetry is an act of communication. With this theory we might be inclined to agree, if Mr. Eastman had satisfactorily defined what is meant by an act of communication. This is, and has always been, the crux of the wayward controversy on this subject. An act of communication implies a communicant; and hence we are entitled to ask how and with what sense and sensibility shall this communicant be endowed. Mr. Eastman, unfortunately, does not tell us. Nor does he tell us what he means by "pure poetry". If he consented to tell us that, we might be able to guess what kind of a communicant of poetry he himself is.

To quote from Kraeplin's "Clinical Psychiatry", as he does, is neither fair nor convincing, for there have been exceedingly minor poets, which almost any nation could at a pinch dish up, poets who have stumbled on at least one Shakespearean or Racinian line. The stumbling, of course, proves nothing, not even their right to claim a touch of that social malignancy, genius. Contrariwise, a felicitous emotional outburst, surrounded by polypy incoherence, from the pen or mouth of an insane man does not disprove, by comparison, the existence of poetic values in a poet who is otherwise obscure to a majority of readers who peruse him with closed or tired minds. The point we are trying to make is that Mr. Eastman is employing, in his article, the same methods of purely abstract defense which his apparent opponents, Miss Riding and Mr. Graves, invariably use. In the case of the latter, however, we are rarely at a loss to know what sort of communicants they are, whereas Mr. Eastman fobs us off with such phrases as "all literature is *in some degree* a communicative act, and I say that modernist literature is characterized by an increasing stinginess in the performance of this act."

Meanwhile we await the further development of Mr. Eastman's ideas on this perplexed subject. Such a development is, we believe, binding on him, now that he has once more launched the old controversy.

*BREAKING OF LANCES*

After the paragraphs immediately preceding were written and just before going to press with the present issue of THIS QUARTER, our attention has been directed to an article in the Spring-Summer number of *Transition* by Harry Crosby in answer to Max Eastman's article. Mr. Crosby's eight page rejoinder to Mr. Eastman's eight-page article forces itself to notice by reason of its very amplitude.

We know of course Eastman's status in public life. We have admired him in his capacity as editor, as poet, as publicist. We were less enthusiastic about his politics. As to his antagonist, to our shame be it said, we had not until now encountered, or had no recollection of having encountered, his name in public prints. We are old-fashioned, or shall we say conservative enough to derive a

certain comfort and sense of security from literary productions when they are clothed with authority. The status of a writer does in some subtle, imponderable, but none the less perceptible, manner affect the core of an argument, sometimes even against better judgment. It should not be so, of course, but such is our frailty, and we own to it. This however does not in the least affect our concern with the issue itself.

Mr. Crosby graciously admits that Mr. Eastman's article is written in good taste. By one of those unaccountable coincidences the two writers have occasion to express a thought that is cognate to both. Eastman does it in this manner: "From free verse it was a short step to free punctuation. I mean the habit of turning loose a handful of punctuation marks like a flock of bacteria to browse over all the page..." Crosby puts it thus: "The Robert Hillyers and Humbert Wolfes, the Edna Saint Vincent Millays, the Walter de la Mares, the Benéts and Untermeyers, the Auslanders and Teasdales who spot with their flytracks the bloated pages of our magazines and anthologies." He is undeniably right in his judgment of Eastman's good taste.

The variety of drinks consumed by this critic in the space of his eight page article is indeed enough to quench the lucidity of such a seasoned drinker as Falstaff himself. As his argument progresses he raises and drinks to his protégés in Red Heart Rum, in Double Stingers, in Irish Whiskey and Cutty Sark. The result of the literary effort becomes a mud pie, inevitably.

Despite Mr. Crosby's assertion to the contrary, we do not believe that Eastman "*bewails* the poet who withdraws into himself." He merely states the fact. No one could reasonably object to a poet's privacy. No one would have the right to protest against, let us say, Mr. Crosby's talking or poetizing to himself, by himself, for himself and within himself. But if he projects himself in utterance beyond his entrails or brain chamber and appears in print, thus using the very instrument, gesticulation excepted, which his pet abomination, the bourgeois, the philistine, the pantalette and petticoat and penny-a-liner poet uses for communication and for communication only; if, we say, he prints and sells or endeavors to sell that others may read what he thinks or pretends to think, what he feels or pretends to feel when the itch of expression overtakes him, — if he does that and

yet doesn't, — exaltedly exclaiming the while: the plain reader be damned (*) it is not chivalrous, it is not cricket to cry off when he is denied sanctuary. If the term communication is not to his liking, and we replace it by publication, it still would not get him any farther, because publication implies a communicant as well.

Perhaps Eastman is too fastidious or too exacting or thinks that it is not in the best of taste when any one addresses him, be he poet or sweeper of street crossings, in a manner which is unintelligible to him. Perhaps the fault is his. Perhaps he has no business to demand sanity in this world anyway. The self-appointed champions of Cummings, Eliot, Joyce, Hart Crane, McLeish are difficult to please, indeed. May the gods shield the bearers of these names against their so-called friends. Perhaps we understand them not always, but we understood them sometimes, and that is enough, as we understood Picasso at one time, then were unable to understand him, and now understand him again. They are each and all strong and big enough to protect themselves when attacked. The tin-soldiers with their toy weapons, the sycophants, the hangers-on, the camp-followers are doing them serious disservice.

Crosby's endeavor to disprove the case which Eastman seeks to make out by quoting against him the very identical authors who are cited as examples of unintelligibility is on a par with the disarming simplicity of the Kentucky fundamentalist who recites biblical passages to him who denies them all authority. And he further betrays, ominously, his unsophistication and worldly innocence by repeated, supposedly corroborating references to Rimbaud, — Rimbaud of all people, — the most glaring instance of apostasy in the history of letters, the shining symbol of the futility of torch-swinging literary doctrine. For nearly twenty years after he had with withering contempt turned his back on literature and adopted a commercial career, to the day of his death, he hated himself utterly for the things he had written, and felt nothing but loathing for them.

The interjection of Rimbaud reduces the controversy to pointlessness.

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(*) Manifesto in the last number of *transition* signed by several persons, including Harry Crosby.

*CENSORS WHOSE EYEBROWS MEET*

The meeting of eyebrows over the bridge of the nose, in the physiognomy of any person, man, woman or child, used to be regarded as a sure sign that the owner of such eyebrows would sooner or later turn into a witch. In other times and places all you needed for eligibility into the ranks of witches and vampires was a drooping eyelid, or what the Elizabethans called a "comical" eye. If thus marked you were duly called to the coven or witch-gathering, and the ceremony of initiation was performed. Among other privileges you were given the license, for instance, to delete words from the Scriptures, words such as *not* in Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery. This, it is all too plain, was an early form of censorship in favor of the heathen gods and demons, Beelzebub, Baal and ubiquitous Satan.

This mania for deleting words, whether in secret cabal or not, presumably in the interests of holiness or vice, has come down to our day in the distinctly modern form of state or social or individual censorship, which is treated from another viewpoint by Mr. D. H. Lawrence in another part of THIS QUARTER. Never having been an eye-witness of one of these modern conclaves of the appointed guardians of the public morals, we are unable to state whether their eyebrows meet in the middle; but in other important aspects the old tradition has been upheld: these covens of censors, who read and wallow in all the salacious books and pictures and movies that are called to their attention, are in bond to Beelzebub; they are interested only in evil, and more specifically in the all-pervasive evil of sex. In the recent confiscation of an English edition of Candide in America by Customs officials, only the so-called pornographic aspect of the book was considered — the satire on Leibnitz was never even hinted at in the public reports. They paid their homage to the demon of pornography, ignoring uttterly the real moral of the book. In other words, they blocked out the *not* from Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery, completely blind to Voltaire's enlightened thesis, namely, if you persist in believing that this is the best of all possible worlds, you do evil both to yourself and others.

This kind of evil has tainted censorship in nearly all its modern forms. For, judging from the way censorship operates, a number of impure influences are to be descried,

especially as regards the entry of obscene literature, so-called, into America. The prohibition of Voltaire's *Candide*, cited above, offers an excellent case in point. And it has started us wondering.

*Candide*, it will be remembered, was recently brought out in the United States, translated by a well-known man of letters. The publisher's advance catalogue containing the announcement of the work was distributed in the customary way, and the book was sold openly. It is probably now still selling throughout the United States. No official objection, so far as we known, has been made to its sale. Why, we are moved to ask, is *Candide* (which is if indirectly a superb satire on censors whose eyebrows meet) pure when published in America and impure when imported from England? Imagine what would happen in France if the French authorities barred the entry of *Candide* published in French in America, on moral grounds, while editions brought out in France enjoyed the freest circulation. In this recent confiscation of *Candide* in America, censorship has, we believe, not only shown itself to be unwise but discriminatory.

*STANDARD OF SPELLING*

Standardized spelling does not appear of overwhelming importance in our eyes. Careful readers will observe that our spelling varies in accordance with whether the writer was brought up on the Oxford Dictionary or Webster's or none at all, and we permit these variations to stand, believing that the spelling, like the style, to say nothing of the grammar, is the man. Moreover there is frequently an inherent quaintness, a visual, even gustatory pleasure derived from a particular configuration of letters. Witness the title of Mr. T. F. Powys's story (which we shall publish in an early issue), *The Papered Parlour*. For us, at least, "Parlour" has a peculiar aptness in a story of English rural life that "parlor" entirely lacks. To each author, therefore, his own spelling.

*SIC TRANSIT*

The passing of the Dial, founded by Messrs. Schofield Thayer and J. Sibley Watson almost ten years ago, is a source of regret to all

those who are, in one way or another, concerned with the animation of good letters. The present Dial, which has ended its career with the July issue, grew out of its Chicago prototype, whose history, despite such excellent names as those of Robert Morss Lovett, Henry Fuller, Lewis Mumford, Burton Rascoe, Harold Stearns and others who contributed to its columns, does not appear to have been especially brilliant. Under the editorship of Messrs. Thayer and Watson the editorial offices were moved to New York and a new policy was adopted, namely the publication of the best European and American writers. This policy was directly in line with the spirit of the original Dial, with its consciousness of Europe, published in the "golden day" of Emerson, Thoreau and Margaret Fuller, who was its editor. Besides publishing the writings of the colonists of Brook Farm, she printed the best of her own essays on contemporary European and American literature. Estimates of Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, Tennyson, Browning, Heine and also Longfellow (to whom Margaret Fuller was particularly ruthless) appeared in Dial's nineteenth century forbear.

At the outset of the Thayer-Watson régime The Dial was excessively guarded in its attitude toward American writers, and that was, we believe, becauses the recognized writers of ten years ago still lived in lymphatic servitude to the "machined" story and the sensational article. This was before the arrival of such fresh, gifted writers as Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, Eugene O'Neill, Willa Cather, Waldo Frank; and even Mr. Dreiser, although belonging to an older generation, had not yet come into his own.

The new periodical, it is true, profited from the experience of The Seven Arts, edited by James Oppenheim, Paul Rosenfeld, Van Wyck Brooks and Waldo Frank, which passed out of existence at about the time The Dial opened its offices on West Thirteenth Street. During its ten years as a monthly review devoted to art and letters The Dial in a sense built up a uniform and vital fabric. Critics who secretly envied its good taste charged it with being unamerican, parochial, highbrow, Harvardish and so on. That these charges were, and are, irrevelant can be shown by simply reviewing a partial list of its contributors over a period of years. Among these are: Thomas Mann, Maxim

Gorky, Jacob Wassermann, Jules Romain, Benedetto Croce, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Paul Valéry, D. H. Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson, Van Wyck Brooks, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, T. S. Eliot, Gilbert Seldes, Archibald MacLeish, Padriac Colum, Llewellyn Powys, Rainer Maria Rilke, Malcolm Cowley, Kenneth Burke, Pierre Loving, Glenway Wescott, W. B. Yeats, Alfred Kreymborg. Moreover, The Dial offered the single annual literary prize which had no embarrassing prerequisites of eligibility or conditions attached to it: two thousand dollars to be used in whatever way the recipient saw fit.

THIS QUARTER, just starting out on its on new career, profoundly regrets the passing of this pioneer "pure" literary magazine, and freely acknowledges the debt of its good example. The Dial showed, as no other current American magazine has done, that taste exists in America, and that trans-Atlantic creative writing can stand alongside its European counterpart with no need to lower its head.

*FREE SPEECH IN SPAIN*

*La Vie de Philippe II* by Jean Cassou (*Nouvelle Revue Française*) merits the attention of all those who do not easily subscribe to the delights of auto-da-fé or martyrdom. In this well-documented book Mr. Cassou confesses his "peu de goût pour les martyrs". It is his reasoned opinion that the executioner as a type has been enormously maligned in order to exalt what has hitherto been thought his antithesis, the martyr. The time has come, however, to reverse this theme, says the author, or rather to consider, and to act upon this consideration, that both the executioner and the martyr belong to the same human species, "infiniment périlleux et détestable". Both are in essence incurable fanatics, Mr. Cassou would have us believe: in the one case it is the cruel fanaticism of those who thrill to torture their fellows; and in the other, the equally cruel and sombre fanaticism of those who rejoice in being tortured.

At this juncture we are reminded that it was Baudelaire who observed in *Fusées* that the executioner and the victim are one and the same. And this brings us back to Philippe II who indeed preempted both roles, alternating that of wholesale executioner with that of the grim ascetic,

whose final agony in his cell in the Palace of the Escurial endured for more than fifty hours.

He lived and died the slave of a fixed idea, and life, even in the persons of those who surrounded his court, brazenly thumbed its nose at him. When his favorite, Antonio Perez, was caught in flagrante delicto with the Princess d'Eboli, the former greatly feared the wrath of his royal master. Whereupon the princess, "surprise dans les bras du favori", with courageous insouciance cried out: "Que m'importe le roi ! Que m'importe le roi ! J'aime mieux le derrière d'Antonio Perez !"

A French commentator on this dramatic scene informs us that this is indeed "le langage de la passion". On this score it would, we are sure, be supererogatory to try to refute a Frenchman. But it may not be altogether irrevelant to remark in passing that, probably, no American or Englishman would underwrite his opinion, and certainly no American hostess whose daughter has danced with the Prince of Wales or the Grand Duke Alexis, or who has given shelter to an heiress-apparent of all the Russias, would concede for a fugitive instant that any bona fide princess (and this Princess was of purest ore) could ever have used such outrageous speech. It simply overturns all our hieratic notions about princesses, and these notions, in the face of everything, we must of course keep in all their virgin integrity and freshness.

# A PARIS LETTER

For years the esoteric inner circle, where literary reputations are made and unmade, held as one of the basic tenets of the faith that Léon Paul Fargue was a great writer — perhaps *the* writer of our times. The public however — not the general public, of course, but the informed three to five thousand who do not wilfully dodge when a good book happens to come along — remained stolidly ignorant.

Quite a phenomenon in our get-famous-quick epoch which among other achievements has to its credit the over-night advent to fame of M. Paul Valéry, now a member of the Académie Française.

A simple phenomenon, however, and quite easy to explain. Fargue was deprived of fame because he did not write (and consequently received none of the prizes which every good little boy or girl in French literary life gets sooner or later if only he or she will play the game). Fargue preferred to live — and what a hectic life his was, the life of a noctambulist cursed with business interests who simply had to appear at *Le Bœuf* to say good morning before the crowd went to bed, and to be at his office in rue de la Grande-Chaumière when the factory whistle blew. Meanwhile he strewed his path with witticisms, profoundities and one or two slender plaquettes; he seemed a nonchalant dilettante, one of those incorrigible *bohèmes* who are the delight and concern of their acquaintances, who die quite unknown and prove sterling subjects for the melancholy necrologist. In other words, a might-have-been.

But Léon Paul Fargue would not be such. He decided to write. Or rather the cumulative weight of experience finally set him writing. And what happened was this: the inner circle had been right. The books, slight enough in format but dense with matter, with which Fargue has been bombarding us at the machine-gun rate of one every three months, are admirable. In them is decanted a philosophy of life, of art, of letters, which is at once savoury and satisfying. Léon Paul Fargue has arrived. He has proved beyond cavil that he is a great artist and a great sage.

Meanwhile the esoteric inner circle had better cease congratulating itself and look for some other pet. Léon Paul Fargue has broken through the walls of the small chapel. He sits now in one of the front pews, but with the congregation. And if he isn't careful, one of these days he will receive a prize and be carried, kicking and screaming, to the Académie by popular enthusiasm.

Three or four years ago André Gide admitted that he had been flirting with the novel and produced *Les Faux Monnayeurs* which, transcendent as it was in many respects, proved not a perfect novel technically. Say what the master will, this admirer of his believes that *Les Caves du Vatican* is a novel, and by far a better one than *Les Faux Monnayeurs*. But my opinion on this controversial point is out of place here. What I wanted to say is this: evidently André Gide has taken more than a passing fancy to this form of literature, and as he proceeds, the flirtation assumes alarming proportions. Let us hope that we shall not lose the unique essayist, immoralist and traveller just to gain another competent novelist. *L'Ecole des Femmes* (N.R.F.) is a meritorious story, convincingly and firmly written, with plot, life-like characters and the rest of the paraphernalia, but with a lack of that subtle Gidian flavour for which the world offers no substitute.

As in America and England, the biography is still flourishing here. The French do it gracefully and well. M. Maurois, that master of this form, will soon bring forth his long-heralded life of Byron. Meanwhile, history, legend and even mythology are being busily scanned for likely subjects. We have had a *Vie Amoureuse de Vénus* (Flammarion) by the inimitable Francis de Miomandre, which shows what a clever person can do with the genre. Among the biographies that deserve praise let me point out Marcel Brion's *Attila* (N. R. F.) , Eugenio d'Ors *Goya* (N. R. F.), Jean Prévost's *Eiffel* (Rieder) (the man who made the tower which was so serenely useless until the

radio and M. Citroën came among), and Jean Cassou's *Philip the Second* (N. R. F.). The last named is a first class work of psychological insight and fine artistry by a man who knows Spain and the Spanish character better than anybody in France.

Jean Cocteau has just published a new novel, *Les Enfants terribles* (Grasset). Cocteau is one of the few, the very few whose work really matters to one who is becoming increasingly critical of contemporary literary effort. Cocteau has always something fundamental to say and has a way of stamping it with the seal of his whimsical originality. His lightning-like intelligence and his taste combine to contrive the rarest of the treats which French literature of today offers.

Emmanuel Bove's recognition by a resounding "prize," Julian Green's powerful and sombre *Leviathan* (Plon), Jacques Chardonne's thoughtful and profound *Les Varais* (Grasset), Montherlant's *La Petite Infante de Castille* (Grasset), remain the high lights of an otherwise rather colourless twelve-month.

With Pierre Minet's *L'Homme Mithridate* (N. R. F.) following close upon the publication by the Black Manikin Press of his first plaquette of poems, *Circoncision du Cœur*, we witnessed the appearance of a very young man who, unless all signs prove deceptive, is destined to leave his mark on letters. The intuition of Pierre Minet and his instinctive command of style, which seem to be his outstanding characteristics, are nothing short of miraculous. When he has a firmer grip on his medium, he will probably produce work of great caliber.

VICTOR LLONA.

# ON CURRENT FRENCH REVIEWS

The most interesting of the new French magazines is *Bifur*, a review de luxe, in large format, on fine paper and profusely illustrated with photographs and reproductions of paintings. Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes is its editor. The type of material *Bifur* publishes is peculiar to it and uneasy to define. Neither straight literature nor literary journalism (by which I mean critical articles), it might be called journalistic literature. The magazine is largely devoted to creative writing that is based on journalistic facts. This is a line never before attempted, so far as we know; and we may wonder whether it is a form which would have come to life without being fostered by a strong publication. Its real validity is yet to be demonstrated — as well as whether *Bifur* will persevere in its present tendency.

In its first issue there is an *American Letter* by Jean Toomer on current matters and devoid of literary comment. The contribution is in Toomer's characteristic manner, but it is doubtful if a poet is the most desirable man to write an article on public affairs. Toomer finds Hoover's election symptomatic. He believes that American life is completely saturated with business and efficiency, and he optimistically concludes that a new American will emerge, now that we know all we can and are capable of everything along material lines; and that this new American will achieve great things in different fields.

Among the other features of the same magazine are Philippe Soupault's *Sports & Co.* and Bruno Barilli's *Letter on Paris*, accompanied by Blaise Cendrars' fragment, *Pompon*, and an essay by Ribemont-Dessaignes, *Good and Evil.*

Soupault undertakes to show that all athletic exhibitions are entirely framed; but, he avers, since the public believes in their fair-and-squareness, it makes no difference, except to the artist. It is the artist's great misfortune always to want to know how it is done, not what is done.

Jean Chuzeville has admirably translated from the Italian Bruno Barilli's lyrical prose and when we watch Barilli become ecstatic about Paris, — the Moulin-Rouge, Montmartre, Montparnasse, Jean Lurçat, *et al* — far from agreeing or disagreeing, we do not even think of what he is saying, swept on by his enthusiasm.

Ribemont-Dessaignes seems to know what he wants, and he makes his reader think. He wants anarchy. Fine. He can have it. We will give it to him, if he proves to us why we should. And here is where he falters. His present essay, like his novels (if such they can be called), is striking by its astounding "trouvailles", which in modern literature correspond to the gags of the comic cinema. But they are not sufficient. If we are French, we ask: Does he not throw us the powder into the eyes ?

Still, his magazine, (to which Nino Frank, has greatly contributed as associate editor), is a success. A success in all but one detail. If, as its advertisements contend, *Bifur* is to replace the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, it must give some room to the younger men and avoid too many box-office (or bookstore) attractions. The elder magazine *made* its contributors, put them over; so far, *Bifur* has been made and justified by them. If that feature is corrected, this new magazine will rank with the best.

In another field, that of pure cinema, *Du cinéma* has made its bow. The editor, Jean-George Auriol, and the contributors are all young, very young men, interested in the movies as an art. It, too, has a peculiar viewpoint: it is attempting to create a literature of the cinema. It prefers to be devoid of "literature" as well as of journalism, and to be entirely "cineastic". In the first three issues a slight excess of fantasy prevails.

If the editor retains full power and continues publishing his own work, as well as the lively and varied contributions of J. Bernard Brunius, Michel J. Arnaud, Harry Alan Potamkin, and a few others, *Du cinéma* may well be the oustanding European cinema periodical.

A few other new reviews deserve mention.

There are three Franco-American bi-lingual publications

whish have appeared lately. The first was *Tambour* (Paris), a literary review; and it was closely followed by *New York Magazine* (New York), a formal publication for the furthering of Franco-American relations, and a magazine called *Paris-New York* (Paris).

*Monde*, which has just completed its first year and is therefore not exactly a newcomer, is a live revolutionary weekly directed by Henri Barbusse and edited by A. Habaru. It is much above the average and, when not too contaminated by politics, is of genuine literary value.

Montparnasse has two new publications, *Paris-Montparnasse*, an illustrated magazine, edited by Henri Broca, and *Les Cahiers du Montparnasse*, a lately revived literary review.

*Jazz* is a fine new illustrated monthly which we will have occasion to review in detail later.

*Royan-Océan*, a summer-resort publication, has an excellent short-story in its first issue and, as a regular feature, a first-rate page of Arts and Letters, run by Francis Ambrière.

*La Courte Paille* is a review of very young writers that has published some fairly good bits, but is as yet greatly lacking in program or direction.

The second number of *Le Grand Jeu* has appeared. This is a quarterly publication by the very youngest of French litterati. It is to be chiefly noted for its tribute to Arthur Rimbaud and contains two hitherto unpublished items by that iconoclast, consisting of a poem, untitled, and a letter to M. Izambard.

Among the older magazines, *La Revue de Paris* has recently published *Le Grand homme*, a novel by Philippe Soupault, and *Stéphy*, a long short-story by Jean Giraudoux. *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, *Le Mercure de France* and *Europe* maintain their high average, but have published nothing particularly outstanding of late.

Lastly, we might mention *Anthologie*, a very lively review, which has been appearing at Liége, Belgium, for the last nine years. It is edited by a remarkable poet, Georges Linze, but the fine work it publishes unfortunately remains known only to a small group.

HAROLD J. SALEMSON.